

Understanding the Two Main Types of Meditation

There are literally dozens of different kinds of meditation practices, even driving meditation, also referred to as mindful driving. Yes, meditating while driving is a real thing, and it can actually make you a better and safer driver. The point here is that almost all recognized forms of meditation fall into one of the two following major classes.

- 1 - Open Monitoring
- 2 - Focused Attention

What is Open Monitoring Meditation?

Open monitoring meditation means keeping your focus open. You don't direct it to one central thought or physical object. You allow yourself to monitor and perceive all aspects of your physical and mental experience. You do this without judging or making any type of mental investment. Anything that you perceive with your brain, your feelings, memories, and thoughts, is recognized. Open monitoring styles of meditation include Mindfulness, Vipassana, and many types of Taoist meditation.

You also tune into your physical senses. You openly monitor anything and everything that causes sensory input, including sounds, aromas, things that you see and touch. You recognize these experiences for what they are. You do not pre-act or react, and simply act as a monitoring station, experiencing every aspect of your present moment without judging or influencing it.

Understanding Focused Attention Meditation

Focused attention meditation is clearly defined by its name. Instead of allowing yourself to monitor all aspects of your existence, you focus your attention on a single object. Some find this form of meditation easier than allowing yourself to be open to every distraction and piece of sensory input around you. Again, there is no judgment or attachment. Over time, focusing on one thought, one body part, one physical object or mantra improves your ability to focus on only that chosen object.

This means as time goes on, a focused attention meditation practice makes you very good at ignoring distractions. You learn to focus your attention deeply and steadily, which provides incredible mental benefits that you can

apply to every aspect of your life. Some examples of focused attention meditation are Loving Kindness, Kundalini and a few forms of Qigong meditation.

Which Type Is Best for Me?

The answer to this is very simple - whatever type of meditation works for you right now is what you should be practicing. Everyone is different. You may find that focused attention makes the most sense for you now, but over time you tend to experience more benefits from open monitoring. The key is to try something, practicing different types of meditation until you find one that works for you. The mental, physical and spiritual benefits of meditation are not argued. Put some type of meditation practice to work in your life, and the limitless benefits of this ancient mental and physical healing art can help you lead a fuller, richer, healthier life.