

# Ocean meditation

*Explore the inner depths of your mind through ocean meditation*

*Words: Jill Lawson*

There is something quite special about the ocean. When we gaze along the surface of the sea we are captured by its magical quality. The ocean is home to a rich myriad of life and contains a whole world beyond the scope of our landscaped familiarity. Those who set out to explore the depths of this powerful mass of water discover harmonious cooperation within its underwater community. While its surface may appear rough and turbulent one day and smooth and placid the next, the inner workings of the magical sea remain constant, in support of interconnectedness, harmony and sustainability.

The simple idea of the ocean easily conjures up an image or emotion. Its fluidity and strength induce a calming effect on our state of mind. Connecting with the ocean or sea is a splendid way to prepare for meditation. Whether we internally visualise or actually see, hear, taste or smell the ocean, it has the power to alter our mood and perspective, taking us to a deep place of mystery within ourselves.

An ocean meditation is a visual journey that can take us below the surface of our thoughts, as we imagine we are diving deep into the ocean. When we dive below the surface of our thoughts, however turbulent or calm, we are invited to discover the depths of ourselves, swimming through the mysterious yet magical inner seascape, more wondrous than how we are just at the surface. Listening to ocean waves instills the sweet sensation of relaxation as does breathing rhythmically. Matching the pace and sound of our breath akin to ocean waves helps bring us to a place of peace and contentment.

## *Getting started*

So let's get started. To begin ocean meditation find a comfortable place to practice, free from distractions such as mobile phones, radios or televisions. If you're lucky to be by the ocean, sit in a safe place away from moving bicycles, cars or baby strollers. If you happen to be landlocked, use an ocean wave CD, or simply imagine the sound of your breath with the ocean waves.

Sit with your ankles crossed in front of your hips or find yourself in Padmasana, Lotus pose. You may place a pillow or a blanket under your hips to allow your knees and back to feel more comfortable. Rest your hands either in your lap with the back of your right hand over the palm of your left as if you are holding a fragile object, or simply place the backs of your hands on your knees with your first finger and thumb together. Both hand positions represent a mudra, which is an energetic gesture used to stimulate the brain in preparation for meditation.

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When you're ready, close your eyes. Bring your awareness to your sitting bones, the bony protrusions at the base of your pelvis. Invite your sit bones to root down into the earth, releasing the weight of your legs. As your sit bones are anchoring down, feel your ribcage lift and the sides of your waist lengthen. Notice your chest rising and your lower back softening. Draw your shoulders back, letting your shoulder blades slide down toward your hips. Relax the sides of your neck and stretch the crown of your head toward the sky. Focus your awareness on your breath and synchronise your breathing pattern like the rhythm of ocean waves.

With your mind's eye visualise the ocean. Bring to mind its surface quality, perhaps slightly turbulent with pounding waves. Concentrate on this internal image. Observe the changing colour of the waves from deep blue to frothy white. See peaks and dips in the water's surface as the waves ebb and flow. Connect with this image. Now imagine the waves calming, becoming softer and gentler. Feel your breath slow and relaxed.

Visualise the ocean's surface smoothing out, becoming wave-less and still. Focus on this image. Let your mind merge with this image, inviting mental waves to settle and stillness to occur. If your mind begins to wander, re-focus by bringing it back to this image. When you are able to stay focused on this image without interruption, proceed with your mind's eye and witness yourself diving below the surface. Breathing is now effortless, light and quiet. Absorb the velvety silence, relaxing all auditory effort. Swim in, float through and merge with the magic of this newly found depth. Connect with the sensation of descending, moving away from thought, and fully immersing into mystery. Discover what is deep within yourself and celebrate whatever you find.

## *Inner Depths*

Ocean meditation calls to our attention the concept that, like the ocean, we are not just how we appear to be on the surface. There is much more depth inside us than meets the eye. How we see ourselves and how we view others is similar to gazing across the sea. When we move beyond what we see on the surface, judging neither turbulence, nor attaching to serenity, we awaken to remember there is a mysterious, expansive world deep within us all. This wisdom softens our ego, frees our mind and opens our heart to living sustainably in harmony, enjoying interconnectedness and unity with all of existence.

When we experience this part of ourselves we become free to release that which does not serve. Our ego, bad habits and attitudes that keep us from feeling joy are washed away, as if they are being carried out to sea, diluted and transformed into sustainable, love giving energy. As a result, we have more room in our hearts to forgive and feel compassion. We understand ourselves and others better and have more energy to give and share. We honour the depth and mystery of ourselves and others with acceptance of who we are on the inside and realise there is no separation between us. This wisdom, as expansive as the ocean, has the potential to instill pure and sustainable joy in everyone.