The Purpose of Meditation
The Three Trainings

1. Ethics
2. Samadhi
3. Profound Wisdom
Types of Meditation

Stabilizing:
Concentration
Focus
Attention
Willpower
Serenity
Equipoise
Quiescence
Calm Abiding (Sanskrit: *Shamatha*; Tibetan: *shyine*)

Analytical:
Visualization
Retrospection
Comprehension
Inner Vision
Clairvoyance
Imagination
Insight (Sanskrit: *Vipassana*)
Qualities of Concentration

Effortless     Vivid
Serene        Intense
Spontaneous   Stable
Unafflicted   One-pointed
Blissful      Undistracted
Continuous    Unobscured
Clear         Selfless
Perceptive    Unconditioned
Non-conceptual  Liberated
Basis of Concentration

Ethical lifestyle
Conducive environment
Reducing desire
Contentment
Renouncing useless activities
Supportive posture
Relaxation
Energy
Withdrawal of the senses
Introspection
Mindfulness
Abandon distractions
Vigilance
Awareness
Self-observation
Concentration Practices

Upon external sensory objects
- Anapanasati (breath)
- Mantra (sacred sounds)
- Relaxation (pulsation / circulation)

Upon internal visualized / conceptualized objects
- Candle
- Stone
- Mandala and sculptures (sacred art)
- Plant (elemental soul)

Upon one’s mind without discernment or distraction
Deepening Concentration

Mindfulness
Remembrance
Vigilance
Identify distractions
Remedy excitement or laxity
Notice an object’s qualities as they are
Do not project qualities
Abandon expectations
Increase relaxation
Unwavering and effortless focus
Gently refocus upon object
Don’t exert thought and energy
Utilize momentary retrospection when losing mindfulness
Qualities of Insight

| Imagination | Sustained |
| Direct perception | Detailed |
| Non-physical imagery | Supraconscious |
| Clairvoyance | Multidimensional |
| Clear vision | Spontaneous |
| Visualization | Factual
  | versus: |
| Receptive | Subconscious: memories / habits |
| Projective | Unconscious: frustrated desires |
| Unconditioned | Infraconscious: deepest traumas, desires, and terrors |
| Conscious | |
| Clarified | |
Insight Practices

Visualizing, pondering, and discerning an object

Visualization and retrospection of memories and dreams

Visualization and comprehension of a deity

Comprehension of conscious qualities
Retrospection Dynamics

Based on a relative state of concentration

Recall your memories and visualize your day (or part of it) from the earliest moment to the last, or in reverse

Observe when thoughts and emotions arise in connection with the visualization

Discern and intuit your mental processes

Consciousness distinct from mental processes
Visualization of a Deity

Achieve some relative level of mental equipoise

Visualize an inspirational image of a Deity / God / Inner Being

Combine with prayer and deep spiritual longing.
Discerning Mental Processes

Comprehend the how and why of the mind
Serenely perceive the mind’s changing states in the moment
Discriminate fluctuating thoughts and emotions distinct from consciousness: non-identification
Consciousness expands while mental processes become subtler
Do not label thoughts or emotions
Apprehend phenomena without conceptualizations of mind-heart
Integrating Concentration and Insight

The greater the concentration, the deeper one’s possible insight.

Imagination is perception of non-physical imagery.

Consciousness must first perceive before it can understand.

Visualization strengthens insight, which augments and inspires deeper concentration.

Perfect concentration (*Shamata*) is not necessary to gain initial wisdom.

Shamata without insight can produce temporary liberation or bliss.

Concentrative absorption is not final liberation.

Perfect serenity and insight are needed for complete liberation.
Advice for Developing Concentration

Overcome procrastination, self-defeatism, and useless activities

Do not forget the practice’s instructions, but follow them

Do not forget the practice, but remain conscious throughout

Start with 2 to 3 short sessions (5 to 15 minutes each).

If you are unable to accomplish these, clarify the teachings through study, reflecting on what you really want in life.
Advice for Developing Insight

In the beginning, visualize less-complicated objects.

If struggling to visualize with clarity, start smaller and simpler.

For larger objects, visualize parts to gain clarity, vividness, sustainability, and intensity.

Practice short but frequent sessions and increase time gradually.

Do not strain or exert your mind: relax.

Allow imagery to sustain and hold: projective vs. receptive.
Resources

Gnostic Meditation

Meditation Essentials

Sufi Principles of Meditation