

Stillness meditation: how to find your natural calm

By Claire Knight | 10 months ago



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With many Australians turning to meditation as a form of stress relief, the practice has reached a mainstream audience in recent years.

However, few may know that Aussies have developed their own form of meditation, free from spiritual or religious attachments.

Pioneered by Melbourne psychiatrist Dr Ainsley Meares, "[stillness meditation](#)" is a medical-based therapy that has reached millions due to its simple approach and widespread accessibility.

World renowned for his innovative ideas, Meares taught thousands of people how to find their own peaceful sense of quiet stillness during his lifetime.

"The essence of his teaching is that we all have within ourselves the ability to be naturally calm, providing we know how to access that," says practitioner Pauline McKinnon, who has been teaching stillness meditation for over 35 years, and has authored multiple books on the subject.

"Stillness meditation is really a form of therapy, it's medically based," she tells Coach.

"It's really the opposite to any other forms of meditation because it's not strictly a technique, it's about helping people to access their own inner strength."

The difference between stillness meditation and other forms of the practice is the use of minimal sound, and complete detachment from cognitive function.

"We don't use words or instructions, just 'murmured sounds' for a few minutes to impart a sense of calm and letting go," explained McKinnon.

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"So it's not an imposed technique, it's helping people to experience their own calm, their own silence, their own stillness, deeply within without putting in any other stuff like mantras or chanting or being mindful or any of those additions."

The practitioner-led practice also involves "calming touch", which is used as a tool to create safety and security.

"Touch is more powerful than words, it's reassuring, and makes people feel safe," explained McKinnon, who treats "all sorts of people", from children through to the very elderly.

"Mostly it's because of general stress, too much anxiety and tension and the pressure of life," she said. "I think we all recognise there's a lot of pressure in the modern world."

While the practice of meditation has been around for centuries, McKinnon acknowledged that it's often connected to traditional styles of philosophical and spiritual practice, or relegated to new age hippies.

"A lot of people do still think it's a bit left of centre, but this is a very practical, medical based, functional and natural practice," she assured.

"We're very everyday people here, teaching a very profound, but everyday life skill."