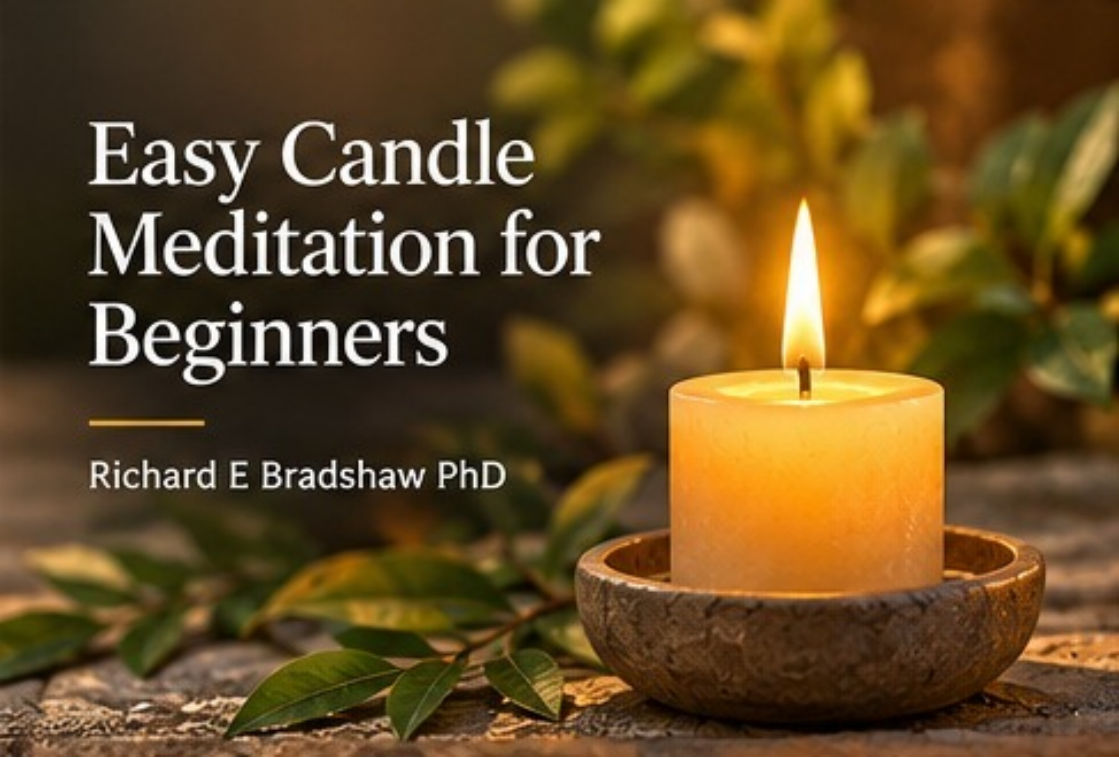


Easy Candle Meditation for Beginners

Richard E Bradshaw PhD



This simple, easy candle meditation is a well-known beginner's approach to meditation. It's a type of Samatha meditation, a tradition that uses focused attention to produce the calm, tranquil mind that meditation needs. It isn't only for beginners, though — I still use it occasionally after fifty years of practice, simply because it's fun and an easy way to relax into deeper states of mental clarity.

To practice the candle meditation, do some gentle stretching first to get the body relaxed and comfortable, then sit on the floor in a darkened room with a candle about three feet in front of you. Sit in a half-lotus, full lotus, seiza position, or any position comfortable for you that keeps your back straight without conscious effort.

Focus on the heart of the candle flame for about three minutes, then lean over and blow out the candle. Close your eyes and focus on the spot right

between your eyes, the third eye.

Keep your focus on this spot, and the afterimage of the candle flame you'll see inside your mind will settle down in front of your focus. Don't try to chase the image if it's jumping around inside your mind. Just keep your focus on the center between your eyebrows until the flame comes to you, settling into the third eye location.

When it does, once again focus on the center of the candle flame in your mind until the afterimage slowly disappears. Then continue in your calm, quiet state, focusing on the third eye.

The more you practice this technique, the better your visualization abilities become, and the longer the candle flame continues to burn inside your mind. This quiets the mind and leads quickly to deeper states of meditation. Practice every day and you'll see real improvement in your ability to concentrate and meditate, and the experiences inside meditation are beyond your wildest imaginings.

For further insights into meditation and its relation to the self and self-actualization, see *Freedom: What It Is and How to Achieve It*.

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