

1) Setting your goals

a- Establish how often you will meditate

First of all, decide how much time you are ready to invest in meditation each week. Be realistic, and set your goals in accordance with your level of motivation and the expectations you have for your progression.

Choose how many meditation sessions you wish to do **each week**: four, five, or six sessions. You will then fill in the corresponding column in the “Goals” chart on the following pages. The two other columns can be left blank.

Example:

- If you choose to meditate five times per week, and your primary goal is to work on your concentration, fill in the "FREQ. 5" column by writing the number 1 on the Relaxation line, the number 3 on the Concentration line, and the number 1 on the Spirituality line. (1+3+1=5)
- You could also choose a more balanced approach to your weekly meditation by planning 2 relaxation sessions, 2 concentration sessions, and one session to work on your spiritual side.

Weeks	FREQ. 4	FREQ. 5	FREQ. 6
Relaxation		<i>1</i>	
Concentration		<i>3</i>	
Spirituality		<i>1</i>	
	4	5	6

2) Planning your sessions

You will now prepare your custom-tailored meditation plan at the beginning of each week, and choose the types of meditation you wish to do according to the goals you set for yourself in the previous step.

This planning step is very useful because it means that when you sit down to meditate each day, you will know which meditation you should do without having to think about it. It's a bit like having a personal meditation calendar.

Here's a reminder of the types of meditation that are recommended for each of your three self-improvement goals:

- A. Relaxation:**
- Vipassana
 - Relaxing meditation

B. Concentration:

- Vipassana
- Candle meditation
- Observation of thoughts

C. Spiritual development:

- Vipassana
- Tonglen

On each line of the “Weekly planning” chart, indicate the type of meditation you intend to do on the day in question.

Don’t forget that it is important to include at least one Vipassana meditation per week. If you wanted, you could also choose to do Vipassana meditation exclusively for all of your sessions.

Example

If you have chosen a frequency of 5 sessions per week, with an emphasis on developing your concentration, you might choose (as in our previous example) to do one relaxation session in the course of your week, three sessions on concentration, and one meditation session devoted to spirituality:

35 MINUTES	GOAL			OK
	Relaxation	Concentration	Spirituality	
Session 1		<i>Candle</i>		
Session 2	<i>Relaxation</i>			
Session 3		<i>Obs. Thoughts</i>		
Session 4			<i>Tonglen</i>	
Session 5*		<i>Vipassana</i>		
Session 6**				

GOALS – WEEKS 3 TO 8

For these 6 weeks, you will use track 2 of CD 1.

Weeks 3 to 8 (35min)	FREQ. 4	FREQ. 5	FREQ. 6
Relaxation			
Concentration			
Spirituality			
	4	5	6

In the column corresponding to the number of sessions you have chosen to do each week, indicate the number of meditations per week that you wish to dedicate to each of the three goals.

Tracking your progress

This section will help you to track your progression on a regular basis, by allowing you to look at the big picture and see how far you've advanced towards the goals you have set for yourself.

This very simple tracking system allows you to take note of and visualize the time you have spent meditating at the end of each week.

Weekly tracking

At the end of each week, set aside a few minutes to take stock of the past week.

To do this, add up all of your meditation times for the week, which you will have noted in the "Weekly planning" charts in the previous section, and write this total into the "Weekly total" column in the tracking chart on pages 46 and 47.

Then add this number to the last number in the "Cumulative" column to get the total number of minutes you have meditated since the beginning of your practice.