

| tranquility

Give Me Shelter

Does Drew Barrymore's Yoga Instructor know what's missing from your home?

text | Angela Braden

Even if the current surge of meditation-infused exercises, Yoga, Tai Chi, or Pilates has yet to permeate your lifestyle, chances are, you still crave the escapism and serenity a meditation room can provide. Turning inward and getting away from external stimulation can add a powerfully enriching element to your life, especially if accessible space is set aside at home. If you ask Progressive Power Yoga guru, Mark Blanchard, who has trained the minds and bodies of the Hollywood elite, top athletes, and high profile executives, meditation is absolutely essential to success and well being.

Location Dedication

Your meditation space can be anywhere, even inside a bigger room, indoors or outdoors, as long as it's quiet, uncluttered, peaceful, and DEDICATED. This means the room or space is reserved for the sole purpose of meditation. Just as Psychologists advise against doing work in bed as it may interfere with sleep, Blanchard insists the meditation space should be reserved for meditation only. This sends a powerful subconscious message as soon as you enter the room. Because you associate the room with a peaceful and nurturing state of mind, your meditation will

Because you associate the room with a peaceful and nurturing state of mind, your meditation will be more effective.

be more effective. If you don't have a separate room for your meditation exercise, Blanchard recommends a clear area of at least 8x8 feet.

Interior Satisfaction

The decor should be very subtle. Your meditation room will likely be the only room with no distraction—no TVs, no appliances, no clocks—just lots of space to stretch out and feel free. “Keeping the space clean and limiting distractions allows you to quiet the mind,” Blanchard explains. Hardwood floors and soothing neutrals on the walls naturally create the right environment. When choosing paint colors, select cool tones that make you feel calm and happy, like shades of green, blue, or lavender. Color can be very soothing to the psyche.

Materials

Natural materials like wood, bamboo, linen, silk, and stone are perfect. “Hardwood floors are the best surfaces for yoga mats,” advises Blanchard. Candles spiked with essential oils can also incorporate aromatherapy into the meditation experience.

Sound

Tranquil tabletop water fountains for background noise can double as sound-proofing for the room. Or use other soothing sounds that drown out noise from the rest of the house, creating a safe oasis for meditation.

Lighting

Use low light such as small lamps or candles. Avoid harsh overhead light—it robs the room of ambience. “High ceilings with skylights work beautifully,” Blanchard glows. Many meditation and guided relaxation exercises involve visualization with light, so the literal lighting of the room can be mindfully relevant.

And what about feng shui principles?

“The feng shui is you and your presence.” —Mark Blanchard |

Mark Blanchard, Progressive Power Yoga guru.



Benefits of Meditation

Meditation means different things to different people, but evidence is mounting that taking time out for delving inward in some way is vital to maintaining health and happiness. Studies have shown that meditation has not only a mental, but also a profound physiological effect on the body. It can help reverse heart disease, the number-one killer in the U.S., reduce pain, and enhance the body's immune system, enabling it to better fight disease (*Psychology Today*, Publication Date: May/June 2001 pg. 561 Barbor, Cary). Blanchard, one of the most respected and sought after yoga masters in the world, explains that today's demanding schedules and daily mental marathons require having a specific place to unwind. “Having a dedicated space for meditation can bring vital balance to your life whenever you need it,” Blanchard says. Homeowners are more likely to leave their cares behind in specifically designed meditation rooms that reflect their individual needs and personality.

Some like to incorporate statues or pictures of deities into their personal meditation room, but Blanchard asserts no rules. In fact, “Simpler is better. I prefer to focus all attention inward,” he says. “It's connecting within the self that is so necessary.” The only requirement is that it's a peaceful and quiet place you can go and do whatever takes you away from it all and allows that inward reflection to flow. Whether that involves practicing Power Yoga or simply sitting in candlelight is up to the individual.