

**KYOTO**  
 MEDITATION  
 ROOM

"This meditation room is located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan," says Lisa Dubin. "The client is an attorney who wanted a place of sanctuary to escape the frenetic pace of New York and additionally a room where she could do yoga several times a week. The room had to be visually calming while allowing for movement."

# BLISSWARD

TEXT CHRISTINE MADELINE HOLM



Create a  
meditation  
space that  
will send  
you toward  
spiritual  
health

**P**roper nutrition. Plenty of sleep. Regular exercise. It's likely you take very good care of your physical body, and your body, as a result of all that hard work and focus, feels good! But what about your spirit? Often, we spend so much time maintaining our physical selves that our spiritual selves seem to be MIA. If you've been feeling like something is missing from your otherwise healthy life—or if your life is a chaotic, imbalanced example of unrelenting turbulence—you may want to consider meditating.

Don't let the word scare you! Meditating is an ancient practice and is often perceived as being an incomprehensible state of unachievable nirvana originating in mystic religions and rituals, but all that's really happening is a state of deep relaxation. Unlike many diet and exercise

routines, you don't need a lot of fancy gear and scales and furniture and how-to books to do it. All you need, really, is the ability to breathe, to close your eyes, and to slow way, way down until you settle into your truly happy place, a place where your spirit feels as good as your body.

What's important, however, is where you meditate. Some can manage it while waiting for a traffic light to change; others of us, who drive in five lanes of high-speed traffic, whether real or imagined, cannot. We need to practice getting in

## The Professionally Designed Meditation Room

Lisa Dubin's meditative designs



Starting out with a small meditation space may work for some, but others turn to professional designers to create these important, health-giving spaces.

With 25 years of experience in the field of architecture and design, New York architect Lisa Dubin is a member of the American Institute of Architects and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

She has sound advice for anyone interested in creating a meditation room. "There has been research to prove that one derives the benefit of precious relaxation and meditation from a space where that is the only association," she notes. "If a space is devoted solely to meditation, there are no stressful events associated with it, and there is a calming, almost mind-cleansing, effect when in the space. A quiet corner doesn't do the same thing because of all the other experiences one has had in the room, as well as all the items that have emotional connections or stimulating effects to the user."

Toward that end, some of her clients have opted to construct brand-new meditation rooms in their homes. Where these spaces are situated is critical, according to Dubin. "The ideal location to me is away from public spaces, major circulation spaces, and children's play rooms. An attic, an end of a wing, or a loft where the movement and sounds of the home are not audible works well," she says.

As for décor? Whether you're just starting out or going with the pros, keep it simple. "I prefer no furniture," Dubin says, "just pillows and bolsters, a niche for whatever items the owner might like to have in the room, which might include a CD player, a place for blankets, mats, and other yoga paraphernalia, a small water sculpture for the calming sound of water, and perhaps an incense burner."

touch with ourselves, and to practice, we need consistent sessions in a conducive atmosphere. We need a meditation room.

### A CLEAN CANVAS

Take tiny steps if you're just starting. Clear the clutter from a corner in the bedroom, the attic, or an outdoor patio, and sit down in the middle of the area on a comfortable pillow. Look around. Consider your senses, one at a time. What do you hear, see, feel? The less you have to distract you, the better. Clear the

## WE'RE NOT JUST ABOUT FENCES



WOOD • VINYL • IRON • CHAIN LINK  
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL • CUSTOM

15803 PACIFIC STREET • OMAHA, NE • 402.333.5722 • WWW.SW-FENCE.COM

### Environmentally Friendly Shades, Budget Friendly Pricing



**HunterDouglas**  
DESIGNER SCREEN  
SHADES

*We've got that covered!*  
**TRETIK'S**  
DECORATING CENTER

Designer Screen Shades are earth and family friendly. In fact, many of our fabrics are GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality Certified®, meaning they meet standards for better air quality in your home.

Call or stop by today to learn more about environmentally-friendly Designer Screen Shades. Many Styles to Choose from.

  
© 2009 Hunter Douglas Inc. The GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality Certified Mark is a registered certification mark used under license through the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute.

Quality Diamond Vogel® Paints • Old Masters® Stains & Wood Finishes  
Laminate Countertops & Flooring • Ceramic Tile • Color Consultations • Design Studio  
Wallpapers, Murals & Borders • Custom Window Treatments & Draperies  
On-Site Consultation • Financing Available



7870 L Street • Omaha, NE • 402.597.1800 • 800.642.2224

www.diamondvogel.com • www.tretiaks.com



# Relax...



...we've got you covered.

**Today's Best Design  
Alternative to Awnings**

**Call 402.498.4418 for  
more information!**

**Website: [www.skyshades.com](http://www.skyshades.com)**  
**Email: [milton.skyshades@earthlink.net](mailto:milton.skyshades@earthlink.net)**

**SKYShades®**  
Residential • Commercial

clutter again, if necessary; get down to the bare walls, the bare floor, the bare window. Wash and clean the area with fresh, natural soap and water. Now, like any emerging artist, you are working with a clean, blank slate.

If those clean, bare walls are too vibrant a color, however, you may want to ease up on the paint palette. Gentle, soft, light hues of pink, green, or blue have been proven to simmer down emotions and create a feeling of equilibrium. A gallon of paint is money well spent here. It's best to have natural-light access if your space is indoors. Sunlit or cloudy, hazy or midnight blue, real light is preferable to man-made. Fresh air is not only good for the mind, but for the soul, too. Some say that facing east when you meditate is to align yourself with natural harmony. For seating, a generous pillow or quilt placed directly on the floor keeps you grounded in your space.

#### LAYER LIGHTLY

Next, layer in sounds and scents. Gather some soothing tunes, especially if your area is near traffic or another outside and otherwise uncontrollable noise. Most people do better with music that's entirely instrumental; it seems easier to release cares when we aren't listening and getting emotionally attached to a human voice. A candle is an excellent source of scent. Keep it, like your color palette, light; anything that overpowers has the potential to overstimulate you out of the realm of calm and send you off to Oz. Scout around for one that makes you smile. If candles aren't your thing, there are lovely reed diffusers or incense or potpourris with just the right hint of aroma to send you straight toward bliss.

#### TOWARD BLISS

Now you are ready. Sit down; get comfortable. Think about all the things you did to create this wonderful place just for yourself. Enjoy the atmosphere that is uniquely yours. Close your eyes. Breathe in. Breathe out. More slowly now, through your nose. In. Out. Quiet and calm your mind until your breathing is gentle enough to hear your heart beat.

Relax all your muscles, starting at your face and moving slowly down to your feet. Breathe. Stay in your meditation room for 10 minutes today. Work up to 15 minutes by the end of the week. Keep it up. Over time, you'll find what you've been missing: you, at peace.

Turn Your Space  
Into Art



**Painted Spaces by Design**  
faux finishes murals creative painting  
**402.657.9547 [PaintedSpacesByDesign.com](http://PaintedSpacesByDesign.com)**

## Oriental Rug Palace



**Cleaning, Repairs  
& Appraisals**

**Furniture & Handmade Rugs**  
• Modern • Traditional • Custom

**Interior Design Services**  
• Furniture • Lighting • Accessories • Artwork

Mon-Sat 10-6 • Sun 12-5

**orientalrugpalace.com — 980 South 72 St. Omaha — 390.1122**



## The *Walking* Meditation

**W**hen the kids are screaming, the dog is barking, the phone is ringing, what can you do? Rather than escape to the bathtub, try a walking meditation.

Head out the door and find a place where there are trees and flowers and natural examples of living things. It doesn't matter what season it is—there is beauty in bare branches and health in cold, clear air. Whether you live in the city or the country, there are spaces where you can connect with nature.

Then, breathe and walk. Remember, in meditation, breathing is one of the main components. Because this is not a power walk—and neither is it an aimless saunter or stroll—get into a calm, regular breathing rhythm, and let that rhythm dictate your walking pace. It should be slow but regular, forward, not with passion, but with intention.

Take in the fresh air. Feel the greenery around you. Absorb the sounds of water, whether they originate from a river or pond or from the sky in the form of rain. Feel and absorb without focusing on anything in particular. This is more about connecting to the positive energy all around you in nature, transforming and drawing that energy into yourself, and letting the screaming, the barking, and the ringing out. You can still take a bath when you return home. Chances are that you'll be calm enough to truly enjoy it. ■

# TAKE **FIVE**

**A** relaxing bath scented with essential oils will help you unwind from the stresses of the day. Studies have shown that the following five essential oils are effective for relaxation and sleep.

### 1

#### SANDALWOOD

A relaxing aphrodisiac and antidepressant, sandalwood calms digestion and aids in finding restful sleep. Sandalwood is also valued for its moisturizing and skin-healing properties.

### 2

#### MANDARIN

A few drops of mandarin oil in a bath will aid restful sleep. It is also uplifting and revitalizing. Mandarin has a hypnotic effect and can calm the central nervous system.

### 3

#### CHAMOMILE

With its wonderful apple-like aroma, this very relaxing oil is good for removing anxiety, tension, anger, and fear. This oil promotes a feeling of ease, comfort, and peace and is beneficial for treating insomnia.

### 4

#### BERGAMOT

Named for the Italian city of Bergamo in Lombardy, this oil has a soothing effect on the nervous system. It naturally balances anxiety, depression, and grief. Bergamot is effective when you are run down and exhausted from constant stress.



### 5

#### LAVENDER

One of the most useful oils in therapeutic terms, lavender is sedative, antiseptic, and calming. It aids in restful sleep and can ease headaches. It is also a good insect repellant and is commonly used to store bed linens because it will keep moths away.

Run a warm bath, adding 10 to 12 drops of essential oil to the running water. Use one oil or make your own special mix by combining two or three of your favorite scents. Relax and enjoy. ■