

Using a Mala (Optional Practice)

Week 3 · Yoga Wise Meditation Course

What Is a Mala?

A mala is a string of beads traditionally used to support mantra meditation. It helps count repetitions of a mantra and provides a gentle physical anchor for attention.

Using a mala is entirely optional. Many people practise mantra meditation very effectively without one.

Why Use a Mala?

Some people find that using a mala:

- Helps them stay present
- Gives the hands something to do
- Supports rhythm and continuity
- Feels grounding and reassuring

Others prefer not to use one at all. Both approaches are equally valid.

How to Use a Mala

If you choose to use a mala, hold it lightly in one hand. Traditionally, the mala is held in the right hand, but comfort matters more than rules.

Using your thumb, gently move from one bead to the next as you repeat the mantra. There is no need to rush.

One bead corresponds to one repetition of the mantra. The larger bead, often called the *meru* or *guru* bead, marks the beginning and end of a round and is not counted.

If you are using a shorter wrist mala, you can simply repeat the cycle as many times as feels comfortable.

Keeping It Simple

There is no requirement to complete a certain number of repetitions. You may stop whenever your meditation period ends.

If the mind wanders, gently return to the mantra and the movement of the beads, without judgement.

The mala is there to support awareness, not to create pressure.

Caring for a Mala

If you have a mala, you may like to store it somewhere clean and special, though this is not essential. Treat it with the same respect you would give any personal meditation aid.

Some people enjoy dedicating a mala to one mantra, while others are happy to use the same mala for different practices. Trust what feels right for you.

A Final Reassurance

Mantra meditation works whether or not you use a mala. The most important elements are regular practice, gentle attention, and kindness towards yourself.