

40 day mantra practice

The period of 40 days has been widely recognized as an auspicious period both in the East and the West since ancient times. A traditional way to do an extended practice of Om Namah Shivaya mantra is to choose a number of repetitions per day, and to do that for 40 days. The mind likes to have a beginning and end to a practice, a sense of completion, such as comes with a 40 day (or longer) practice.

Fixed time per practice session: Mind finds comfort in knowing that it will do the practice of one round of 108 repetitions (or some other number of rounds), and that each round will take a predictable amount of time.

Same number of rounds: Mind also likes the predictability of doing a certain number of rounds done per day. Mind may resist at times, but once it gets started in the practice, mind likes the habit.

40/90/120/1000 Day Sadhanas

There is a common saying, "I am what you eat." In the yogic sciences, there is another saying. "Your habits define you." The problems in life come from our habits. The Divine dwells in the saint, as well as in the thief. The only difference is how people act. Our actions come from our habits.

Kundalini Yoga recognizes every soul as perfect, pure and Divine at the start. There is nothing to redeem or purify at the soul-level. The soul is complete and beautiful as it is. But life is based on our habits. Our habits define us to ourselves and to other people. By our habits, you live in peace and happiness. By our habits, you create misery and pain. When you change our habits, everything around us can change.

Specific number of days: Mind also likes the plan of knowing how many days or months a practice will take to complete. This can be very beneficial in stabilizing a noisy mind, which is a common complaint. A mala is a set of counting beads with 108 beads. Only 100 are counted, with the other 8 considered an offering to the divine, however you personally hold that. You might choose to do 1, 2, 3, 4, or more rounds of 108 mantras per day, counting with a set of mala beads.

It has been said that there is freedom in discipline; choosing to do a regular practice frees the mind from wondering what practice will be done that day. It is also important not to do the mantra practice with rote repetition, but rather, with feeling and awareness.

By running your own experiment for 40 days, you can decide for yourself whether or not the practice of Om Namah Shivaya mantra is beneficial.

Extended practice : A noticeable level of mantra siddhi (power of the mantra) is said to come with 125,000 repetitions of a mantra (Such an extended practice is called apurascharna). This is equivalent to 1250 rounds of a mala. Such an extended practice with Om Namah Shivaya mantra can have a tremendous effect in stabilizing the mind in preparation for advancing in meditation. Such a practice simply must be done personally to understand the benefits. It does take quite a commitment to do this practice every day for such a long period, but it is well worth the effort.

In choosing the level of practice per day, it is important to have stability from one day to the next, and to not skip any days. It is best to choose the level that works for you consistently, rather than changing the number from day to day. For example, if two rounds per day is a good number, then it's better to stay with that amount each and every day, not to do none on one day, but four on the next day.

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Practice a particular kriya or mantra every single day for the same amount of time. Based on the number of days you do this, here is how it will affect your habits.

40 Days: Practice every day for 40 days straight. This will break any negative habits that block you from the expansion possible through the kriya or mantra.

90 Days: Practice every day for 90 days straight. This will establish a new habit in your conscious and subconscious minds based on the effect of the kriya or mantra. It will change you in a very deep way.

120 Days: Practice every day for 120 days straight. This will confirm the new habit of consciousness created by the kriya or mantra. The positive benefits of the kriya get integrated permanently into your psyche.

1000 Days: Practice every day for 1000 days straight. This will allow you to master the new habit of consciousness that the kriya or mantra has promised. No matter what the challenge, you can call on this new habit to serve you.

Remember, a habit is a subconscious chain reaction between the mind, the glandular system and the nervous system. you develop habits at a very young age. Some of them serve our highest destiny. Some of them do not. By doing a 40, 90, 120 or 1000 day special sadhana, you can rewire that chain reaction. You can develop new, deeply ingrained habits that serve your highest good.

“One part of sadhana should stay constant long enough for you to master, or at least experience, the changes evoked by a single technique. Each kriya and mantra has its individual effects, although they all elevate you toward a cosmic consciousness. Learn to value the pricelessness of one kriya, and all others will be understood in a clearer light.”

–Yogi Bhajan

<http://www.swamij.com/om-namah-shivaya.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxkuN-vTom8>