

Thames
&Hudson

High Grade Living

Jacqui Lewis



High Grade Living

A guide to creativity, clarity and mindfulness

Jacqui Lewis and Arran Russell

A handbook for shifting from stressed, anxious and overwhelmed to creative, grounded and happy, using ancient knowledge applied to modern living

Illustrated throughout

26.5 x 20.5cm

208pp

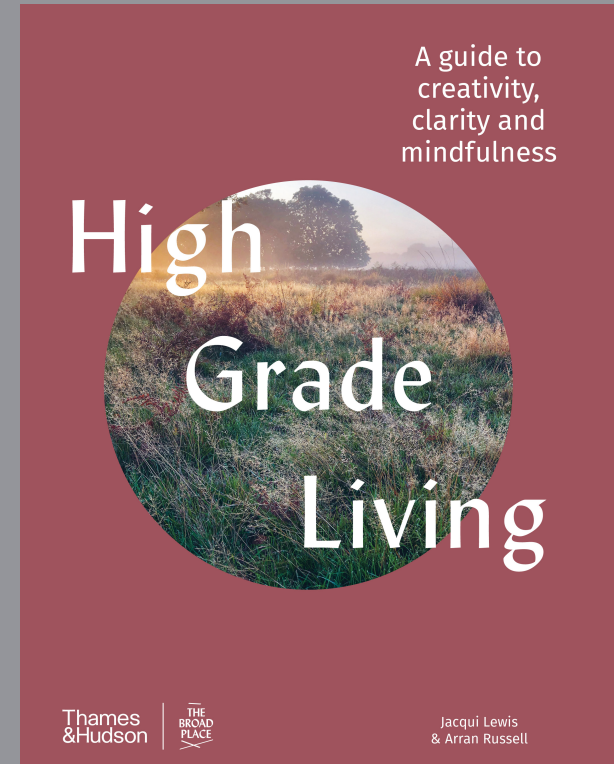
ISBN 9781760760342

BIC Interior design, décor & style guides

Hardback

£24.95

January 2021



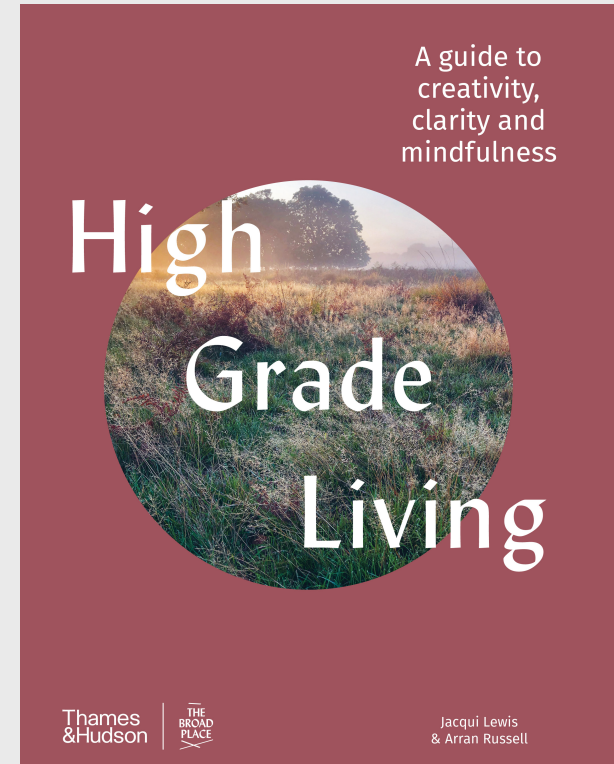
A4

Book



Key Sales Points

- Delivers ancient knowledge through a modern filter with inspiring photography, making the lessons approachable and easy to apply.
- Some 200-500 million people around the world meditate, and that number is growing - this book teaches you everything you need to know to become part of the movement.
- Presents a visual feast of global travel and beautiful interiors, with advice on achieving clarity and living a more conscious life.





How We Found Our Broad Place



Getting started

If you want to learn meditation, where do you begin? We feel that a basic background understanding of meditation, a brilliant teacher and a technique that works for you are what makes a person connect to meditation practice. If you haven't found a technique or teacher you like, keep looking. Meanwhile, you can practise on your own.

There are many myths and misconceptions surrounding meditation: people believe that it must be done in complete silence, that it requires you to live an ascetic life, and that it doesn't count unless you spend hours each day on it.

In reality, there are many ways you can practise meditation. Just like with exercise, not every meditation style is for everyone. Each method can differ greatly in terms of engagement, time and outcomes.

Finding a routine that suits you – and acknowledging that this may take some trial and error – is as important with meditation as it is with physical exercise. If you went for one run around the block and didn't immediately love it, it's unlikely you would then dismiss all kinds of exercise for the rest of your life, believing it simply isn't for you. Yet this is a common approach to meditation: people adopt the attitude of 'tried it once, couldn't do it' and then never have another go.

We encourage you to let go of all your preconceived ideas about meditation and start experimenting with practices that work for you.

There is much debate between traditionalists and innovators as to whether meditation should be taught online or only in person, but it really depends on the technique. At The Broad Place, we only teach Integrated Meditation in person, as we believe that's what works best for this method. However, there are also countless resources online and in books such as this one that can help you begin your meditation journey from the comfort of your own home.

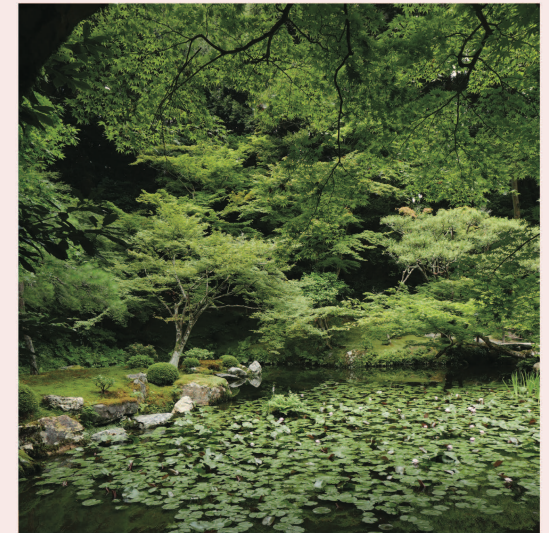
Breath meditation

We recommend learning meditation in person with a teacher, rather than from a book. However, you can get started on your own with a beginner's style of meditation that is widely used, where the breath is the focal point.

Even though we're breathing all the time, we often forget to breathe deeply and properly in the course of our day. Breath meditation helps us centre ourselves and become completely aware and present.

right Gardens like these are created as places of meditation and contemplation within the temples that are everywhere in Kyoto, Japan. We always think: Imagine what cities would be like if they all embraced meditation and created special places for people to meditate. What a shift in energy it would be.

following pages At home we often burn incense during meditation sittings, and the smoke wafting and curling in the air is a beautiful sight to open our eyes to at the end.



Seeing the big picture

The key to any meditation practice is discipline. You simply won't experience anything new if you don't apply yourself. We like to teach students that meditating twice a day for twenty minutes accounts for 3 per cent of their day. We meditate to enhance the other 97 per cent.

Remember to approach your practice with patience and a willingness to learn, but also give yourself a break if you don't feel like you're connecting with it just yet. Let go of excuses and the idea that you're not doing it enough or not doing it right. You'll find that you'll see results much sooner this way.

You can never master meditation. We meditate to master life, not the other way around. Meditation is about discipline, consistency and dedication, and there are no shortcuts to a truly committed meditation practice.



right *Meditating at a temple in Japan.*



opposite The beautiful property of our friends Kim and Stephen, whose home we cared for whilst they were away, and whose dog, Chief, became our pup-nephew for life. This is where we would sit, build fires, cook, paddle down the river, and while away hours upon hours over that special summer.

following pages, right A return home: Palm Beach in Sydney, Australia, was where I grew up and then resettled after having my daughter, only to fly off again and eventually come back for a large chapter that reshaped our lives forever.

Turning life upside down

Arran and I tried an experiment in early 2016. We wanted to find out whether we owned our things, or they possessed us. We had been discussing this idea for years and years: what if we, as adults, re-created our home from the ground up? What could we learn?

We had spent the summer house-sitting for friends on their stunning 60-acre property in Byron Bay. The house was only half finished, so there were very few appliances and only a handful of bowls and cutlery. We washed the dishes after every meal and spent our days barefoot at the beach, on the river and cooking and eating outside. Marley was too scared to sleep downstairs on her own, so she slept on a mattress in our room with our dog Honey, and we essentially camped our way through this time. The simplicity of our days together, in constant orbit and flow, was life-changing. Immersed in sun and sea, we were able to rebuild on every level.

I had to return to Sydney a week early, and I will never forget walking into our huge, glass, designer-filled rental home and feeling nauseated. The place suddenly felt hollow, and I ached for nature and Arran and Marley like a fever. I wandered around opening windows and doors to let in fresh air, but it didn't matter how much poured in; I felt like I couldn't breathe. I realised that we couldn't live like this any longer – financially, physically and emotionally stretched as individuals and as a family.

I started to look up beachside rentals in Palm Beach, where I grew up and my parents still lived. I found a fully furnished cottage, set on the exact nature reserve where I used to play as a child. The rent was almost half of what we were currently paying, and once I saw it I could see why: it was also a quarter of the size. However, it was stunning beyond belief – adorable and retro, with a light-filled garden and glimpses of the ocean from the front and back.

We committed to the experiment and gave away or sold almost all of our possessions, donating the proceeds to charity. The ancient philosopher Atticus once said, 'What a strange world. We trade our days for things.' This rang a little too true for us back then. We had invested a lot of time and energy into buying and acquiring objects, and we felt we needed to



High-grade kitchen

A kitchen cleanse can be one of the most satisfying edits of the house. It will hold all kinds of insights into how you are living and eating. Your kitchen is the heart of nourishment for you and your family and friends. Over the years, my family has had incredible kitchens: open plan, with plenty of storage and amazing appliances. We've also had the most hobbit-hole-of-hell kitchens, with no storage and cockroaches flying out of the itty-bitty cupboards. And I have always tried to make them work, giving myself over to the lessons that each kitchen taught me.

I have to admit that the same beautiful food has come from each and every kitchen, because it's the heart that goes into the dish that matters, not the kitchen it was made in. So begin to view your kitchen as a little temple to your heart and see how that can flow into your food. If you have ever been camping, you will know that simple food cooked with presence tastes amazing, even with just one cooker and one pan!



Auditing your kitchen

Take a really good look around your kitchen. Look in the cupboards and all the drawers, and don't forget the fridge. Journal your responses to these questions:

- What do you see, organisation or chaos?
- Are there any ingredients you can't remember buying?
- Is there an exotic and intriguing group of ingredients?
- Are your essentials neatly displayed?
- Are there fundamental staples you can't live without?
- Can you barely see these through a sea of products and ingredients?

Editing your kitchen

If you are hanging onto food you don't use, the edit will be insightful – and possibly painful. The many cooking shows and books out there are great for inspiration, but the downside is that a lot of us enthusiastically purchase things we use just a pinch from once. If you find yourself asking, 'What did I even buy that for?', it can go. Being very honest is important. Having a pantry filled with fantasy items doesn't inspire us to cook each day; it just makes us feel guilty and ashamed.

The kitchen edit involves not just food, but appliances, crockery, utensils – everything! Here are some things to consider as you edit:

- Is any food out of date? Throwing away what seems like perfectly good food can be confronting, but it will help reprogram how you buy food in the future.
- Are there any items that you don't use? This includes things like the fancy spices you bought on a whim, or those four different jars of pink Himalayan salt. Consolidate what you can, and move everything else on. Then once you think you have finished, do it again. You will be much better at this the second time around.
- Are there any crockery or utensil items that have been sitting at the bottom of the cupboard for months or years? Donate them! The same goes for that fancy appliance you've only used once since being gifted it at Christmas.

Refining your kitchen

Fill your kitchen with only the very best ceramics, cookware and ingredients, and keep it really simple. Less is more in the kitchen. It's not going to happen overnight; it will take time, heart and patience. Enjoy where the process takes you.

opposite Grower's markets are an amazing opportunity to source ingredients and recipes from local growers. This is a chard and goat cheese tart that a vegetable grower suggested I make, and he was right – the combination was delicious.

above The utterly impressive and beautiful collection of plates from Hiromi Karatsu, who can explain where every single one came from!



USE YOUR BEST EVERY DAY

Are the items you love most not being used very often because they are 'precious'? High-grade living is not about saving things up for a special day. It's about using your best quality every day. Use your best glasses at every meal. Your favourite plates are perfect for toast and tea on a rainy day. Try to mix it up, not favouring a single type of bowl but experimenting with different types. We shop a lot for handmade ceramics and always for vintage, so every single plate and cup is different. Try mixing it up to make every meal more creative, instead of having eight matching white plates!

