

HOW TO CREATE AN ALTAR

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WHAT IS AN ALTAR?



An Altar is your own personal place in the world. It is an outer representation of your inner world. It is the place where you go to sit with the Divine, to pray or meditate. The altar of life resides within your body but to have an external reflection brings greater consciousness, connection and clarity.

It's a way of honoring yourself by having a sacred place that is solely yours.

Prayer is making a petition, a request asking for assistance or guidance.

Mediation is the art of dropping into the stillness and listening to the answers or wisdom that arise from those prayers.



Choose your

LOCATION

1 The first step in creating an altar space at home is intentionally choosing a location. If you live with others you have to find a place that you claim as your own. It should be a quiet space where you can sit undisturbed and enjoy some personal time. Make sure the location has good energy and feels like it can be a personal sanctuary. The best location is in the East but if that is not available, you can build your first one anywhere.

It is okay if your family or children see your altar as long as everyone understands it is not for them to touch. This may be an opportunity to demonstrate boundaries as well as lead by example. Everyone, including children can be invited to carve out a space for themselves in their home.

2 Altars are usually built on a flat or raised surface. Your altar could be on a small table or platform, but it could also be on a shelf or tabletop. Whether you make a small altar or a large one, keep your special space dedicated to its purpose. Place protective boundaries around the area, and keep it clear and clean of debris and clutter.

Height of your altar: What is your preference? Would you feel more comfortable sitting on a chair or do you want to sit closer to the Earth on a meditation cushion? You can build a shelf on the wall or use a small table.



Bless Your

SPACE

3 Make sure to gather or purchase any of the following herbal allies: palisanto, sage from the garden, mugwort, cedar, or incense. First, call in the Divine and set intention to bless and clear the space to make room for your altar. This not only prepares the space but it also clears a space within you to make room for a more enriched spiritual experience being welcomed into your life. You may sing or just hold your intention with an open heart: I bless this space with love and grace or you can chant (Om Namah Shivaya).

4 The next step would be to put down a cloth or scarf to hold the energy of the altar. Here is a list of the colors below. Listen to your heart and choose the one needed at this time. You can reset and change your altars monthly or quarterly. Here is a brief description of the meaning of colors.

White – Holds all the colors and is known as the 8th color –associated with purity, clarity, lightness and a desire for all to be seen.

Red- Red is the color of blood and symbolizes passion, vitality, and power.

Purple- Symbolizes royalty, mysticism and it is majestic in nature and is connected to higher consciousness

Blue represents wisdom and the vastness beyond our perception.

Pink – Love, kindness, abundance and compassion

Green ~ Earth, peace, grounded, transformative, money

Gold or Yellow ~ Radiance, cheerful, warm and inviting.



What goes

ON MY ALTAR

5 I recommend putting the 5 elements on your altar as a way of harmonizing with nature both within and in the living world. We are all made of the elements. For example: live flowers, plants, crystals or a rock represent the Earth. Water in a vase holding the flowers or a clear glass with water represents the water element. A candle represents fire. For the air element you may burn incense, place a feather or a fan on the altar. For Ether/Sky element I have a statue of an angel that I feel close to.

6 You determine what makes an item sacred. It could be a necklace your young child made for you, or a handkerchief that was passed down from your great grandfather. If the item has significance to you and brings you feelings of celebration, peace, love, or inspiration, it's a good choice.

Engage the senses. Making your altar beautiful is a feast for the eyes. A small bell or instrument creates sound that carries its energy to the ears. For smell, light incense, or use essential oils. For your taste buds you may offer sweets. For the eyes you may light a candle and marvel at flowers. And finally, for touch, consider the cushion you sit on, and an optional shawl or blanket that is only used while engaged in your sadhana (spiritual practice).



What Statues

BELONG ON MY ALTAR



7 If you feel a connection to a particular God, Goddess, Angel, Ancestors, or Animal Spirit, you are welcome to add them to your altar. I have many aspects of the Divine that have arisen over the years. Who are you most drawn to? You may feel a connection to a particular form of art or an interest in mythology. Do you appreciate: Greek, African, Indian, Asian, Native or Egyptian stories, art or clothing. Pay attention and get curious. You can walk with a prayer to deepen into more of your essence and for your lineage and soul family to come forward and assist you in awakening and re-memorizing who you are.

8 Some suggestions are: Earth goddesses, Lord Ganesha, Mother Mary or Jesus, Buddha, Shiva, Quan Yin, Isis, Saraswati, or Hanuman. You may feel drawn to particular forms of art which can be placed on or above your altar. You know what you love, and what you love is part of who you are. If African art sings to your soul then follow that thread. My first altar was filled with Goddesses and animal spirits. In Tantric philosophy, the deities aren't considered anything outside of you, but represent aspects of your own human nature. Statues are representations of the quality of consciousness that you long to bring forth within your own life and embodiment.

What Else

BELONGS ON MY ALTAR

9 If you have a Mala or Prayer Beads you can place them on the altar when you are not using them. You can hang your beads on your statues (murtis) which will keep their energy sacred.

Oracle Cards or Pieces of Art

Place your oracle deck, or certain cards, on display on your altar. Small pieces of art that inspire and encourage you also bring positive energy and blessings to your space.

It is wise to begin journaling to note down your insights and inspiration. Writing is a sacred practice which pulls from our subconscious mind revealing feelings or thoughts seeking expression. You may also have a sacred text, or books that you feel inspired to read. Keep them all close and in reach of this sacred space.

Photographs of your teachers, guru, children, or relatives helps to bring you into a state of oneness with those who inspire you and have helped you come to the current moment. By adding these photos to your shrine, you are celebrating your mentors, teachers, and the people in your life that have challenged you and made you who you are today.

I created my altar

NOW WHAT?

Making the altar is an important part of the practice, but it is simply décor until you use it for your spiritual practice. With your intention and regular use, your altar comes alive and becomes a place of refuge. Here you will deepen in your experience and access personal truths, nourishment and connection. Through rituals, Prayer, Meditation, Ceremony and Chanting you “feed your soul” and the items on your altar are charged with powerful energy. Your vibration will shift and so will your space.

One of the nice things about having a home altar is that it is an ever-present part of your experience, and each time you walk by it, you can receive some of its energy. I highly recommend starting your morning at your altar and setting intentions for how you want to experience your day. Then you can delve into your chosen spiritual practice to cultivate your essence, still your mind and get centered in your heart.

May your altar help you stay rooted in your truth and carry the strength of your intentions throughout your day. May you enjoy the process and receive more peace, calm, and love in every area of your life. Anything that helps you feel closer to your Divine nature is worthwhile, so be flexible, curious, and creative in how you curate the details. Let the sacred around you reflect the sacred within!

Bless Your Journey!