



Mindfulness Meditation

What is it

- Meditation is a structured practice of concentrated focus upon a sound, object, visualization, the breath, or movement in order to increase awareness of the present moment. It is paying attention on purpose, to the present non-judgementally. It also reduces stress, promotes relaxation, and enhances inner balance and peace of mind.

How to do it

- It is helpful to set a special time aside each day to practice meditation. You can start with 5 to 10 minutes a day, increasing to 20 minutes over time. It can also be helpful to practice at the same time and place each day.

Posture

- Seat – find a solid, grounded, stable position on a chair or cushion
 - let body relax in the position, not too tight and not too loose
- Feet – flat on the floor (grounded)
- Hands – hands on thighs, palms down (grounded)
- Back – as straight as possible
- Chest – soft/open
- Ears – above shoulders
- Chin – ever so slightly in towards the chest
- Jaw – relaxed
- Mouth – slightly open, like “ah”
- Tongue – softly touching roof of mouth
- Eyes – open and gazing downward, using soft focus

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Breath

- Notice your breath going in and out. Not forcing or changing it — just noticing it.
- Increase the length of the out breath. Each time you breathe out, allow yourself to let go and relax.
- Occasionally check your body posture, and then go back to paying attention to your breath.

Thoughts

- It's natural that thoughts will arise, and your mind will wander. That's okay.
- It may be a thought, an image, or an emotion — just label it all “thinking” and bring your attention back to the “In and Out” of the breath.
- Be very kind to yourself when you notice your mind wandering. Gently say to yourself “thinking” and bring your attention back to the breath.

Variation

WALKING MEDITATION

- Walk slowly, hands in front or by sides as you would usually walk.
- Pay attention to your body; feel a sense of ease.
- With each step, feel the sensations of lifting your foot, moving it forward then placing it on the ground.
- Notice when the mind has wandered away, label it “thinking” and bring your attention back to your body and to moving each foot.
- You can say “lifting, swinging, placing” to yourself to help stay focused on your body.
- Paying attention to the in breath and out breath also helps you stay focused on your body in the present moment.