



Mindfulness of Breathing

Mindfulness meditation trains your mind to stay in the present moment by focusing on your breath. This practice can be integrated into your entire day—whether you’re eating, walking, sitting, lying down, or driving.

For this session, we’ll focus on sitting meditation. With your eyes closed, direct your attention to the rising and falling of your abdomen.

During practice, your mind may attempt to distract you, leading to various triggers, such as:

- Awareness of one of the five senses (hearing, smelling, tasting, seeing, touching)
- Thoughts that bring you to the past (remembering) or future (thinking)
- Craving, pain, hunger, or emotions

How to Stay in the Present Moment and Conduct the Meditation

To stay present, focus on the breath, specifically on the rising and falling of your abdomen:

- Inhale: Mentally say “rising” as the abdomen comes up.
- Exhale: Mentally say “falling” as the abdomen goes down.

If a trigger arises, such as a memory or thought, acknowledge it by mentally noting it three times (e.g., “thinking is arising, thinking is arising, thinking is arising”). Then, return to the present moment by focusing on your breath again.



Managing Awareness of the Five Senses

When awareness of the senses arises, don't identify with the experience—simply note what it is and let it pass:

- Hearing: Mentally note “hearing is arising” three times.
- Touching: Mentally note “touching is arising” three times.
- Smelling: Mentally note “smelling is arising” three times.
- Seeing: Mentally note “seeing is arising” three times.
- Tasting: Mentally note “tasting is arising” three times.

Handling Emotions and Physical Sensations

If an emotion arises, such as anger or sadness, remember that it is the mind experiencing these emotions, not you. Detach from the emotion by noting, “It's not me, myself, nor I. Craving/sadness/anger is arising,” three times.

For physical sensations, such as pain, acknowledge the sensation without moving your body immediately. Instead, focus your mind on the sensation and note it specifically (e.g., “burning, cramping”), three times. If the pain persists, visualize drilling into the source of the pain with your mind, note the sensation, and return to focusing on your breath.

Dealing with Distractions

Distractions will happen. When they do, simply note them (e.g., “remembering” for the past or “thinking” for the future), and return to your breath.

Be gentle with yourself—if it takes time to realize you've been distracted, just note it and refocus on your breath.

Advanced Practice

Once you become comfortable with basic mindfulness, you can add another point of concentration. However, for now, as a beginner, focusing on the breath is sufficient. If you're ready to advance, reach out, and I'll guide you further.

If using the phrase “is arising” feels cumbersome, you may choose to simplify it. For example, instead of “thinking is arising,” you can say “thinking” three

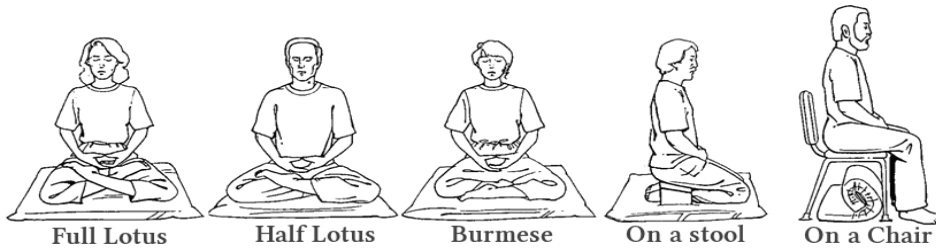


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times. Experiment with what works best for you, but give each method several days or weeks before switching. Frequent changes can prevent your mind from settling.

What Does a Meditation Session Look Like?

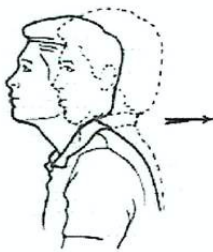
1. Find a comfortable position.



2. Place your hands comfortably—on your knees, thighs, or as shown in the illustration.



3. Keep your spine straight, with your chin tucked slightly to lengthen your spine.



4. Close your eyes and visualize a string pulling you upward from the top of your head.

5. Begin with a body scan, from toes to crown.

6. Note any distractions and return to the present moment by focusing on your breath.



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Consistency and Practice

Aim to meditate daily for at least 30 minutes. If this feels challenging, start with shorter sessions, such as 5 minutes twice a day. Gradually increase the time as you become more comfortable.

Closure

If you don't want to meditate for whatever reason, that's no problem. You can try to implement this technique in your daily life. When you're sitting and doing nothing, instead of letting your mind wander, try to focus your concentration on the rising and falling of your abdomen. If your mind drifts to the past or future, simply note it and bring your attention back to the present—the rising and falling of your abdomen. If you're distracted by one of your senses, note it as described above.

I personally use this technique when I'm sitting somewhere waiting, doing nothing, or even just sitting still. Once, I was in a restaurant with a friend who was scrolling through their phone. I decided to follow my breath instead. Suddenly, I found myself in a state where nothing else existed—only the rising and falling of my abdomen. Then my friend said my name, and I came back to the present moment. They asked, "Where have you been?" and I replied, "I don't know, but everything was gone." It felt as if I had slipped into a meditative state without even trying. Later, I realized that this had indeed happened. With practice, you too can reach such moments of disconnection from the noise of the world and discover a profound inner peace within yourself.

You can also incorporate mindfulness into your daily life while walking. Instead of scrolling on your phone or feeling lost while looking around, follow this simple technique: When your left leg moves forward, mentally say "left." When your right leg moves forward, mentally say "right." If your mind begins to wander to the past or future, note it and return to the present moment. These are two ways you can bring mindfulness into daily life. You can also apply this practice while eating. For instance, when you lift your spoon or fork, mentally say "touching," "holding," "lifting," "moving," "putting in mouth," then "moving back," "dropping," "placing," and "chewing, chewing, chewing." You might think this level of detail is excessive, and I understand. If you ask whether I practice this regularly, my honest answer is: no. I only practice it



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during Vipassana meditation retreats. Outside of retreats, I might have done this a few times (literally countable on one hand) to calm my mind during moments of worry or distress, but generally, I don't. I do, however, eat mindfully, focusing on the food and not on my phone.

Because of this, I find it challenging to eat and talk at the same time. If others join me at the table, I either eat or talk—I don't do both simultaneously. I prefer to focus on the act of eating rather than splitting my attention. I try to live as mindfully as possible to prevent my mind from taking control and returning to the “monkey mind” state I experienced in the past, where my thoughts would jump around uncontrollably.

With Metta,
David