

Mindfulness of Breathing Instructions

In mindfulness of breathing the aim is to put your attention on the sensations involved in breathing.

This practice can bring some measure of calm: instead of letting your thoughts run away with themselves (as they often do) we focus on something real. Mindfulness of breathing is a valuable practice in itself, and it is also a good preparatory practice for other kinds of meditation.

In my experience the most benefit comes with a regular practice: little and often is better than one long session a week. Even a daily five minute practice done can bring benefits. As you get more experience you should aim to sit for 15-20 minutes each time. I think it is good to practice to sit at the same time each day, I recommend either first thing in the morning or the last thing at night. Experiment at different times and see what works for you.

It's good to make a commitment to a number of sessions; this gives you a real chance to get to know the practice. Perhaps you will decide to practice every day this week, or every week-day for the next few weeks.

The meditation

Find somewhere to sit where you won't be disturbed.

Decide how long you are going to sit for. I use a mobile phone app called 'Zen Timer' to help me sit for the right amount of time, you might choose to set an alarm (nothing too noisy), or just have a clock nearby that you can glance at.

Sit down. There are formal meditation postures you can use, but the important thing is to sit comfortably in a stable position, with a natural curve to your back. Find a position that you can sit in easily for the length of the meditation.

Some people like to practice with their eyes closed, but if you do this when you are tired there is a danger that you will fall asleep. Try sitting with your eyes half closed, or even completely open. If you would like to sit with your eyes open, find something neutral to look at like a plain wall.

Begin to notice how you are breathing. Notice how the air enters and leaves your body, and how the shape of your body changes with each breath. Don't try to change how you are breathing, just notice what's going on. If you take a long breath, just notice it's a long breath. If you take a short breath, just notice it's a short breath.

When your mind starts to wander, gently bring it back to the sensation of your breathing. It's quite normal to get distracted many, many times.

Just keep noticing the breath.

Practice regularly, and see where it leads.

~ Kaspia Thompson, The Buddhist Therapist

To book a session with Kaspia, or find out more visit: www.thebuddhisttherapist.com