

MINDFULNESS OF THE BREATH AND BODY

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Find a comfortable way to sit, close your eyes, and relax your body. Bringing attention to the sensations of breath, continue redirecting the attention to the breath each time it wanders. Try to be as friendly and kind as possible to your mind's tendency to wander.

Three minutes of silence

If you are new to meditation, continue focusing the attention on the breath.

Pause

If you feel ready, begin to expand the attention to the whole body. Bring attention to your posture. Feel the pressure of your body on the cushion or chair. Feel the contact points of your hands touching your legs or resting in your lap. Direct the attention to sensations of sitting.

Pause

With the foundation of present-time awareness, as established by the continual returning of the attention to the breath and body, you can now allow the attention to expand to include all of the sense doors.

Begin with the awareness of hearing. When you become aware of a sound, simply pay attention to the experience of hearing—the bare experience of sound being received by the eardrum.

Pause

Although the mind wants to instantly name the object being heard, the direct experience is just variations of sound. Using memory and conditioning, the mind immediately tries to label the sound as a car passing by, or the wind in the trees.

Pause

In this level of practice, try to see the difference between the direct experience of sound and the mind's conditioned labeling of the experience. Keep it simple; it is just hearing.

Pause

Expand your attention to seeing, tasting, and smelling in the same way. Just seeing and the direct experience of what's being seen—color, shape, form, and so on. Just taste. Just smelling.

Pause

Notice how quickly the mind names and classifies things based on memory. This level of mindfulness allows us to see how the mind is constantly trying to sort and name experiences based on memory, rarely allowing for new or fresh perspectives.

Three minutes of silence

When the attention gets drawn back into thinking, simply return it to the breath. Then continue to extend mindfulness to the direct, moment to moment sensory experience of the whole body.

Pause

Allow the attention to be drawn to whatever experience in the body is predominant. When sounds arise, know them as hearing.

Pause

When visions arise, know them as seeing. Don't settle for the mind's labels and conventions. Experience each moment as if it were the first sensation of its kind ever.

Pause

Bring a childlike interest and curiosity to your present-time experience. What does this moment feel like? What is the temperature, texture, or pressure of this sensory experience?

Pause

Continue to connect the attention with the felt sense of the breath and body. Begin refining the attention to the moment-to-moment flux of sensations. Investigate the constantly changing nature of each experience.

Pause

With clear comprehension receive the transient phenomena with nonjudgmental awareness. Attempt to sustain awareness of the arising and passing of each chosen sensation.

Pause

Continue redirecting the attention and reconnecting with the present moment each time the attention is drawn back into the contents of the thinking mind.

Pause

Attempt to rest in the direct experience of the breath and body, relaxing into the present-time awareness of impermanence.

Two minutes of silence

(Ring Bell)