

Basic Sitting Meditation

Allow yourself to take an upright, yet relaxed posture, sitting or standing; a posture that reminds you that for the next few minutes, you will be paying attention to yourself, in a quiet, still and dignified way. As well as you can, let the spine be erect, but not rigid; the head resting softly on the neck, the shoulders relaxed; the hands supported on the lap, however they feel comfortable; and the feet firmly planted on the ground. You do not need to feel, or be relaxed: that is not the intention, although it may possibly happen.

With this posture, allow yourself to begin to notice that you are breathing. Wherever you notice breathing most keenly - at the nostrils or the belly - simply notice the in-flow and the out-flow of the breath. Nothing to fix or change, just to notice, allow and let breathing happen.

From time to time, your attention will wander; this is natural and not a problem. When you notice you are thinking, or hearing, or sensing something other than the breath, then simply note where you are, perhaps making a mental note such as "thinking, thinking" or "hearing, hearing" and then gently, and kindly escorting your attention back to your breath. You may need to do this many times over the course of a few minutes of sitting meditation. Remember that every time you notice that your attention has wandered is a moment of awakening, of mindfulness, and this is the task at hand. It is not about starrng at the breath, but attending to it and returning to it here and now with an open and compassionate heart.

Try this meditation for 3 minutes once per day, and gradually, over a few weeks, increase to 10 or 20 minutes per day, most days. Remember this is time for you; time for you to stop doing, and just be.