

Scanning of the Body

Calming the mind:

Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe naturally. Become present in the moment and place where you are. Just focus the mind on the rising and falling of your shoulders and chest as you inhale and exhale gently. Allow your mind to settle and become calm and present, ready to engage in meditation.

Motivation:

Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to become a wiser and kinder person, able to be of benefit to all beings.

The main body of the meditation:

Focus your attention on your physical body. Find the most suitable sitting position for meditation, with your spine straight and erect, a position in which you can be aware and awake, but not stiff or rigid. Focus your attention on the lowermost point of your body, where your body is in contact with the earth. Feel the substance and earthy character of your body. Concentrate for a moment on that contact, on the weight and substance of this physical form. Pay attention to the character of your mind, your consciousness, while focusing here. Now slowly and mindfully move your attention upward through your body. Pay close attention to every aspect of your body, your physical sensations. Note areas of tension, and relax them. Note sensations of coolness or warmth. Note places where one part of your body is touching another. Move upward, through your legs ... your hips, your hands in your lap. Note the curves of your body's silhouette. Move upward ... your belly, your waist, the curves of your arms. Continue to move upward ... the rising and falling of your chest with your breathing ... the curves of your shoulders. Keep moving upward ... slowly, mindfully. Pay special attention to your shoulders, neck, and jaw. If there is tension there, relax those areas. Move still upward ... the tilt of your head ... until you reach the crown of your head.

Dedication

Dedicate all the positive energy you have created through the practice of mindful meditation to becoming a better and better person who is more at peace in life and who can bring more peace and well-being to others in every moment of every day.

Counting the Breaths

Calming the mind:

Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe naturally. Just focus the mind on the rising and falling of your shoulders and chest as you inhale and exhale gently. Allow your mind to settle and become calm and present, ready to engage in meditation.

Motivation:

Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to become a wiser and kinder person, able to be of benefit to all beings.

The main body of the meditation:

Start by focusing your attention at the opening of the nostrils. Pay attention to the very subtle sensations as you breathe in and out through your nose. You can feel certain sensations as the air passes, as the small hairs move, cooler sensations as you inhale, warmer as you exhale. Don't follow the air into your body or out into the surrounding environment. Place your attention on the sensations associated with the breath at the opening of your nostrils. Your job is to keep your attention firmly placed on those sensations only. As you inhale and exhale, mentally count each inhalation and exhalation together as one. Count from one to ten, concentrating on those sensations. When you reach ten, begin again at one.

If you become distracted, if the mind wanders to other things and moves away from the point of concentration, then begin again at one. Even if you never get past two, it is not a problem! The point is to train your mind to focus on one point only; this concentration can take some practice to attain. Once you start to attain some mastery over the technique, then once you reach ten, count backwards from ten to one. Then start again, counting from one to ten.

Dedication:

Finally, dedicate your positive energy and insights to the well-being and happiness of all living beings.

Bare Attention Exercise

Calming the mind:

Find a quiet place and ensure that you will not be disturbed. Sit on a comfortable seat or cushion with your back straight. Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe naturally. Use one of the breathing meditations you have learned to settle the mind and bring it to a state of deeper focus and concentration, ready to engage in meditation.

Motivation:

Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to become a wiser and kinder person, able to be of benefit to all beings.

The main body of the meditation:

Start by focusing your attention at the opening of the nostrils. Pay attention to the very subtle sensations as you breathe in and out through your nose. You can feel certain sensations as the air passes, as the small hairs move, cooler sensations as you inhale, warmer as you exhale. Don't follow the air into your body or out into the surrounding environment. Place your attention on the sensations associated with the breath at the opening of your nostrils. Think of yourself as a gatekeeper, just watching the breath flow past as it enters and exits the body, keenly observing everything that arises in this area of focus. In the beginning, if you find it helpful for concentration, you can mentally note "In" and "Out" with each inhalation and exhalation. Use the breath as an anchor for your attention. If your mind is especially scattered and distracted, place more emphasis in your meditation on the element of concentration, focusing your mind more firmly on your breath. Distractions are normal. Your attention may be distracted by a thought, or by external sounds or sensations in your body (itching, pain). As soon as you wake up to this and realize that it has happened, simply take note, such as "thinking" or "sensation." Don't get upset or disturbed. Don't judge. Then very gently disengage from the thought or distraction and return your attention to the breath.

When you gain a deeper level of concentration and focus, loosen your concentration slightly and place greater emphasis on the element of mindfulness in your meditation. Allow your mind to be attentive and observant of whatever comes to notice – regardless of what it is. Don't identify with the mental elements arising. Simply observe them, like a tourist. Allow them to arise as you observe them, and pass away, without getting involved. Just be aware. As you gain greater mastery over this kind of meditation, each time the mind wanders from the breath, begin to note specifically how and where it has wandered. To thoughts of the past? To present thinking or fantasizing? To future planning? What kinds of thoughts tend to attract the mind's attention? What does this indicate about the delusions that play a role in your life?

Do this for ten minutes and then take a short break. Then do one more ten-minute spell and end your meditation session.

Throughout the day, check whether or not you are being mindful – do you always know what you are doing while you are doing it? Meditation is not an isolated

activity. It is an integral part of our lives.

Dedication

Dedicate all the positive energy you have created through the practice of mindful meditation to becoming a better and better person who is more at peace in life and who can bring more peace and well-being to others in every moment of every day.