



Meditation sitting down - conscious breathing

This exercise involves sitting for 10 minutes, so take a moment to find a comfortable seated position on either a straight-backed chair, a meditation stool or a firm cushion. If you sit on a chair, you can also use a thin cushion or blanket to sit on, so that your hips are slightly higher than your knees.

Place the soles of your feet against the floor so that your legs are not crossed. If possible, sit slightly away from the back of the chair so that your spine is self-supporting.

Regardless of your position, keep your back, neck and head aligned so that your posture is straight but not too stiff. Let your hands rest comfortably on your thighs or in your lap. You can lower and relax your shoulders so that your posture expresses dignity, alertness and awareness. Connect with this moment. Let your eyes close lightly if that feels good, or look downwards. Notice the sensations in your body as you sit still. Can you observe a feeling of pressure or other sensations in the places where your body is touching the floor or seat? Perhaps you notice sensations in your legs, or perhaps in your arms.

Now focus your attention on your breathing. Notice how the physical sensations change in your chest as breath goes in and out of your body. If you want, you can lay your hands on your stomach for a few breaths and notice how the sensations change where your hand is touching.

Follow each breath from beginning to end. Notice how the physical sensations change in your stomach each time you inhale and each time you exhale. You may notice short breaks between inhalation and exhalation. You don't need to try and control your breathing in any way. Just let your breathing happen at its own pace. Remind yourself that you're not trying to achieve anything, you're not trying to reach any specific state. Just let your experience be what it is. Your breathing simply flows in and then flows out.

Sooner or later, your attention will wander away from the breathing. Thoughts, plans, dreams will come to mind. This is not a problem. It's not a mistake. It doesn't mean failure. When you notice that your attention is no longer focused on breathing, just observe the change in focus. Then bring your attention gently back to your stomach and the changing physical sensations. Each breath in and out is unique. Each one involves different sensations. Be aware of each breath as it happens. Let each breath anchor you to the present moment.

Sometimes your thoughts will wander for a moment or sometimes they wander for a longer period. It's easy to feel like you are failing to meditate properly when you have these wandering thoughts. But do not feel like you have failed. Meditating is not an effort to empty your mind or push thoughts and emotions away. It is simply a process of becoming aware of the mind's movements. Try to notice what your mind is doing.

When you notice that your mind is wandering, take a moment to observe where it has gone. Then try to release whatever your mind is focusing on, and gently bring your mind back to breathing. Bring your attention back to breathing every time it wanders elsewhere. Each time this happens, start from the beginning with the next breath in, and continue the exercise at your own pace.



Now, as the exercise comes to an end and you're sitting and breathing, remind yourself that you can use breathing to ground yourself at any time during the day. You can observe your sensations with curiosity – from one moment to another and from one breath to the next.
