

LESSON 8: MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING

Mindfulness exercises that emphasize the breath include guided breathing, body scan, and mindful movement.

Have you been practicing the breathing exercises that were introduced in Lesson 1? What have you observed through your breathing practice? If you have not been practicing breath exercises, what is interfering with your practice?

Thich Nhat Hanh described the breath as “the bridge which connects life to consciousness.” It is an accurate description of this invisible life force as the breath involves movement from the external, invisible realm of the world around us to the internal, physical reality that we experience (and vice versa).

Breathing happens naturally. When we pause to pay attention to the belly, chest, or nostrils as we breathe a couple of times, we develop patience and resilience that we can apply in times of stress. The breath brings us to move our focus from our busy minds to our bodies. By learning to use breath, we can learn to pay attention in the moment, to be mindful and to restore ourselves.

Summarize the science-proven benefits of mindfulness of breathing.

Simple Steps for Breathing Practice

1. Come to a comfortable seated or lying down position. Ensure that the back is straight and the body is as relaxed as possible.
2. Take a moment to ground yourself into the space you are in by closing your eyes or looking downward. And then, noting the presence of the room around you. What does the air feel like against your skin? What does the earth feel like beneath your feet, backside, or resting body?
3. Then, draw your attention to the natural rhythm of your breath. Without trying to change or control it. Simply practice observing it exactly as it moves in this present moment. You might notice its pace and depth shift, allow this. Simply hold your focus on each in breath and out breath. Also, observing the brief pause in between each inward and outward movement.

Teaching Points

- Guidance on Posture - Invite participants to use an upright posture or at least become aware of posture.
- Clarity of Instructions - Be clear in your delivery of what you want them to do and include instructions to keep their minds from wandering.
- Help participants to recognize and sense the three steps of breathing.
- Encourage participants to find time each day to practice breathing. A natural place to begin is when they feel stressed.

Three Mindful Breaths Meditation

Go to Mindfulness Exercises.com to the guided meditation for Three Mindful Breaths.

<https://mindfulness Exercises.com/course/day-2-three-mindful-breaths/>

Practice this exercise repeatedly. What is your experience?

Mindfulness Teaching Fundamentals

Reflection Questions

What physical sensations do you notice in your body as you breathe?

What is your comfort in guiding others to focus on their breathing? What will help you to be confident and calm as a teacher of this element to meditation?

Supplemental Activity

Six Mindful Breathing Exercises

Go to mindfulnessexercises.com and study the mindful breathing guide and the meditations on the breath:

<https://mindfulnessexercises.com/6-mindful-breathing-exercises/>