

Breath Awareness Meditation

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



Throughout much of our modern way of living, we tend to forget that we're breathing. While the breath continues on without our conscious effort or awareness of it, drawing our attention to it can deepen our sense of peace and ease by easing the body's stress response.

Mindful breath awareness and deep breathing practices can help to reduce cortisol levels, one of the body's primary stress hormones. So it goes without saying that the breath is a powerful tool that is worthy of our fullest attention.

PRACTICE:

1. To practice, begin in a comfortable seated position, straightening the spine and softening the rest of the body.
2. When you feel ready, close your eyes as you draw your attention to the breath. Without trying to change the breath in anyway, notice how effortlessly it flows into and out of your body.
3. Keep this relaxed, open attention on your breath for 2-3 minutes. If the mind wanders (as it does for all of us), simply observe this movement away from the breath before compassionately inviting it back.

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4. To move deeper into this exploration, pay attention to each subtle movement of the breath:

- The inhalation, beginning at the nostrils and moving slowly through to the lungs
- The slight pause at the end of the inhalation, chest and belly expanded
- The exhalation and the way the body contracts or 'falls' as the breath moves back out
- The slight pause at the end of the exhalation, chest and belly relaxed

5. Spend another 3-5 minutes observing each of these subtle phases of the breath. Then, expand your awareness to encompass the entire physical body. Note what parts of the entire body move in tandem with the breath.

6. Continue to watch the breath as it moves through the entire body for 3-5 minutes. All together this practice will run anywhere between 10 and 15 minutes.

7. When you are ready, gently shift your attention to the floor or other surface beneath you. Ground yourself into the physical world before slowly opening your eyes.

NOTES:

Breath awareness has been an important part of many ancient traditions. Buddhism, for instance, has long understood the importance of the breath, noting such practices in the ancient Anapanasati Sutta.

In other regions of the world, too, the breath has long been revered as a powerful life force that is worthy of great consideration and devotion.

Though a seemingly simple movement of energy that we often take for granted, the breath holds the potential for great inner peace, personal power, and insight.