



SITTING MEDITATION

- Sit in a comfortable and dignified position. If you are using a chair, sit in one with a straight back with your feet flat on the floor or a bolster if your feet don't reach the floor. If you sit on the floor, you may want to sit cross-legged style with a thick cushion to raise your buttocks. Either way, the point is to embody the wakefulness that you are cultivating through mindfulness practice and in a position that you can maintain for a while. Allow your hands to rest comfortably on your lap.
- If it is comfortable, close your eyes. If not, keep your eyes open, positioning your head straight ahead and then lower your gaze to a spot on the floor.
- Make a gentle intention to be alert and aware of your experience.
- When you are ready, draw your attention to your breathing. Notice your breath wherever you notice it the most. Allow the breath to be as it is. Don't try to change your breathing, just bring gentle awareness to it.
- During meditation, the mind will leave the breath. This is not considered a distraction, but part of the practice. You do not have to try to suppress thoughts. Each time you notice that your mind has left your breath, take no responsibility for its wondering. The mind simply wanders. With patience and gentleness, bring your attention back to the breath. If you notice that you are judging yourself during this process, you can let go of that judgment.
- You may start with a few minutes or as long as you want. People with an established practice typically meditate for 20 to 45 minutes.
- When your practice of focusing on the breath feels stable, you can expand your attention to include focusing on your body as a whole, your thoughts and feelings or perhaps the sounds around you. Note the nature of thoughts and feelings and that individual thoughts do not last long. Avoid being drawn into thinking about the thoughts, simply observe and note them. Come back to your breath if you get lost in this process.
- If you have the urge to react to physical sensations, such as an itch, simply notice the urge and stay with the focus of your meditation. After experimenting allowing the sensation to be present without changing, if you feel you need to move, then do so with awareness.

Adapted from Full Catastrophe Living, by Jon Kabat-Zinn