

The Awareness of Breath Meditation

EXERCISE 1

1. Assume a comfortable posture lying on your back or sitting. If you are sitting, keep the spine straight and let your shoulders drop.
 2. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.
 3. Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the inbreath and fall or recede on the outbreath.
 4. Keep the focus on your breathing, "being with" each inbreath for its full duration and with each outbreath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing.
 5. Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and the feeling of the breath coming in and out.
 6. If your mind wanders away from the breath a thousand times, then your "job" is simply to bring it back to the breath every time, no matter what it becomes preoccupied with.
 7. Practice this exercise for fifteen minutes at a convenient time every day, whether you feel like it or not, for one week and see how it feels to incorporate a disciplined meditation practice into your life. Be aware of how it feels to spend some time each day just being with your breath without having to *do* anything.
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EXERCISE 2

1. Tune in to your breathing at different times during the day, feeling the belly go through one or two risings and fallings.
 2. Become aware of your thoughts and feelings at these moments, just observing them without judging them or yourself.
 3. At the same time be aware of any changes in the way you are seeing things and feeling about yourself.
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