

Mindful Breathing Exercises

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 in-breath and fall or recede on the out-breath.
4. Keep the focus on your breathing, “being with” each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing.
5. Every time you notice your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently and non-judgmentally (having no relationship to your thoughts) 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 1,000 times, then your “job” is simply to bring it back to the breath every time, no matter what it becomes preoccupied with. Practice this exercise at a convenient time for 15 minutes every day, whether you like it or not, for 1 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.