

## A Simple Breathing Meditation

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- Sit or lie in a comfortable position, with your head and back straight.
- Close your eyes, and begin to notice your breath coming in and going out. Choose one place in your body to notice your breath (for example, in your nostrils, your chest, or your abdomen).
- Continue to notice each in-breath and out-breath.
- Soon your mind may start wandering. Various thoughts and ideas may appear in your mind. These thoughts may be accompanied by feelings, positive or negative. You may get carried away in thought for several moments before you realize that your awareness is no longer focused on your breath.
- As soon as you realize that your attention has wandered from your breath, return your attention to your breath.
- Some people find it helpful to count their breaths in order to help focus their awareness on their breathing. Some people count their breaths from 1 to 10, or from 1 to 100, and then start over again at 1. Others count their breaths to 10 or 100, but start over with 1 no matter where they are in the count each time they realize that their attention has wandered from counting their breaths.
- Try not to be discouraged, or think you aren't meditating correctly, when your awareness wanders into thoughts. It is normal for your attention to wander from your breath during meditation. It's part of the process of meditating, and it happens to everyone.
- Keep in mind that in meditation you are not trying to *force* your mind to stay focused on your breath. Meditation is not about force. It helps some people to think of their awareness as a pure blue sky, and the thoughts that arise during meditation as clouds that appear and float by in that sky. When you realize that your attention has wandered to these thought clouds, just let them be as they are in the sky, while gently turning your awareness from them back to your breathing.
- You can meditate for as little as 10 minutes at a time, or for up to an hour or longer, depending on your level of experience.
- In mantra meditation you simply focus your awareness on repeating your mantra word or words, instead of your breathing. Both breathing meditation and mantra meditation are techniques of *concentration* meditation, as opposed to *insight* meditation.