



## Mindfulness of Breathing Meditation

In this practice, you dwell in a calm, relaxed, alert state of mind by focusing on the sensations of your natural breathing – you simply notice the sensations of the breath in your body without trying to alter your breathing. If at any time your attention wanders away from the sensations you gently bring it back.

The Mindfulness of Breathing meditation is traditionally done in four stages. You might start with five minutes per stage; later increasing to about ten minutes per stage.

You begin by settling into a comfortable, relaxed, balanced posture.

You then start to count your breaths as a way to stay on track in attending to your breathing: count after each out-breath in the 1st stage, then count before each in-breath in the 2nd stage.

In the 3rd stage, you drop the counting and simply attend to the sensations of your breathing.

In the 4th stage, your attention settles on the subtle sensation of the breath entering-and-leaving the body, which is felt near the tip of the nose or perhaps in the mouth.

<i>Preparation</i>	Settle into a comfortable, balanced posture; relax your muscles, perhaps with a body scan from head-to-toe in which you sequentially relax each area of your body, especially during out-breaths.
<i>1st Stage</i>	<p>Breathing naturally, count after each out-breath in sets of 10, over and over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breathe in, then out, and count 1;</li> <li>• breathe in, then out, and count 2;</li> <li>• breathe in, then out, and count 3;</li> <li>• continue up to 10, and then return to a count of 1...</li> </ul> <p>If your attention wanders away from the breathing gently bring it back and begin counting at one again.</p>
<i>2nd Stage</i>	<p>Count before each in-breath. There is a subtle difference here in the quality of attention as it now involves some anticipation. As in the 1st stage, count in cycles of 10 breaths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• count 1, breathe in and out;</li> <li>• count 2, breathe in and out;</li> <li>• Continue up to 10, and then return to a count of 1 ...</li> </ul> <p>If your attention wanders, gently bring it back and begin counting at one again.</p>
<i>3rd Stage</i>	Drop the counting and continue attending to the sensations of the breathing.
<i>4th Stage</i>	Now shift your attention to the sensation at the point where the air enters-and-leaves your body. Among other sensations, you might notice a slight coolness where the air first enters the nose. Simply keep your attention focused on the subtle sensations where the air enters-and-leaves.