

Beginning Well

Full breaths

Exhale fully on the out breath, emptying the lungs of all the air. Allow the in breath to be full and replenishing. Repeat three times. Alternatively, breath in though the left nostril only, and out through the right, then in through the right and out the left. Repeat three times.

The Right Posture and Attitude — bodily fabrication

Check in with the energy in the body. Is there a lot of upward energy in the system? Feel how this is similar to the feeling we get when standing. To balance this choose a posture that is more grounded. Or is there a downward/lack of energy? This is like the feeling in a reclining posture, it is helpful to counter this with a more upright posture.

Note: With skill born of observation and exploration we can cultivate the 'inherent' energetic inclination of other postures in the sitting posture. We do this by bringing a flavoured intention to the energy body to either: ground; rise; open; gather...

A little mettā and gratitude — verbal fabrication

Practice can get dry and repetitive, but we can bring in freshness and juiciness. Spend a few moments reflecting on the good fortune you have to be alive, reasonably well in body-heart-mind to be able to apply yourself to meditation, and to have the time. Not everyone has this luxury, you are fortunate. Allow this gratitude to flow through you.

Call to mind other beings you know practice, maybe they are practicing now. As you think of them wish them well: May you be happy...well...safe...at ease. With each phrase feel that nourishing quality come through you towards them. Now offer mettā to yourself, and anyone else who you feel would benefit from some kindness at this time. Then let this go.

Choose a practice

By this time you will have gained a sense of the calmness and malleability of the heart-mind. If the heart-mind was very busy, a calming and focusing practice would be supportive. A long and full breath practice helps here. Try to be fully with all of the movement of the in and out breath. Adjust the attention to be more attentive when the breath is all the way in or all the way out: this is the prime mind wandering moment. If the mind wanders be happy to be found. Celebrate the 'aha!' moment; encouraging the mind to bring us back to the present. Then have a breath that feels pleasant to stabilise. If the mind keeps wandering include a gentle counting practice to keep the intellect engaged. Primarily being attentive with the breath, in the background increment a count each time you're present when the breath is fully out. Try to have no sense of failure.

Review

At the end of the meditation take a few moments to feel how that went. Were you present with your experience? Did you support well-being or stress? What else could be helpful?