

Mindfulness of Breathing Long and Deep

Begin by inviting your body to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Whether sitting on a cushion, bench, or chair ensure your body is supported in the posture you have chosen.

To help yourself fully arrive gently scan through the body from the head to the feet. If you find any areas of tension just let them relax as much as possible.

Especially pay attention to any tension in the area around the eyes, the jaw, the shoulders, the belly.

Let the out breath relax, and the in breath welcome, these areas of tension. If possible don't make a problem out of sensations. But develop a more intimate connection with bodily life.

With a sense now of the whole body tune into the breath coming in at the nostrils flowing deep into the body right down to the belly or even deeper than that.

Invite your attention to ride with the breath in and out of your body, like a surfer on a wave, or a boat on a swell. If this is pleasant feel free to enjoy it, meditation doesn't need to be a struggle.

If the mind wanders, which it will from time to time, just come back to the breath. This training is simple but not necessarily easy. It is natural, and expected, that we will get lost, the only thing that matters is how we respond when we 'find' ourselves again.

You may like to explore what effect it has to relax the face, shoulders and belly first. Take your time with all of this. Sometimes it may also be helpful to gently note where your mind went. Simply note with one word the flavour or intention of the thinking; 'planning', 'fantasy', 'memory'...

But resist trying to work far back in time, or understand all the nuances of the train of thought. This much investigation will usually lead to a spiral of thinking, unless the whole being is very calm already.

Keep bringing your attention back to the simple act of breathing long and deep. Don't strain to bring the breath long, rather invite it to be deep. Connect to the rhythm and the movement of breathing as it happens. Let the quality of your attention be light and relaxed, allow the experience to happen.

Enjoy the luxury of simply being: with no need to compete, with nothing to get right nor anything to do, and nothing to add or remove from what is.

In general see if rather than meeting the breath as an anatomical, rational, and scientific logical happening, can we open to it more on an energy level? In this way pay attention that the energy is flowing around your body. Is there any sense of blockages or areas of holding? Or any areas where the breath isn't reaching, or feel numb? See if you can gently invite the breath into these areas.