

Mindfulness of Breathing Short and Subtle

Begin the meditation by tuning into your body; check your posture is relaxed and open. Take several deep breaths, allow each in-breath to bring you more and more into your body, and allow each out-breath to relax and soften you.

Feel the breath from within as it enters your body as deeply and as gently as feels appropriate or natural.

While resting the attention in one area at a time, pay attention to the breath moving in and out of this area of the body.

For a few minutes feel the breath coming in and out of the nostrils. Try to remain relaxed and interested in the subtlety and nuances of the breath as it happens.

It's important to keep the attention intimate and alive, check in with yourself: Am I actually experiencing the breath right now or am I imagining the breath? If it's the latter; come into the body and feel the breath from within.

After a few minutes with the nostrils let your attention ride with the breath down to your throat for a few minutes.

Then down to your chest and heart area. Breathe in and out of your heart area for some minutes, bringing yourself back to simply breathing when your mind wanders.

After some time of being steady in the heart area, allow the breath to guide you deeper into your body, seeing if you can be with the breath in your lower belly and navel area.

Let the breath happen within a light and gentle awareness. Gently becoming more connected and more intimate with a refined attention with the breath energy. Find out where your attention can most easily be steady, play to your strengths and stay there for the rest of the meditation. If you're uncertain, stay in the heart area.

Allow the breath to take its natural rhythm, not making it be faster or slower, nor longer or shorter than feels natural and comfortable. But do notice what feels comfortable right now.

Sometimes the breath will slow down and become quite subtle, we should also allow for this too.

The breath is always appropriate to the environment. Run up a hill we will naturally pant, deep and fast. Get shocked and we will suck in a short breath quickly. Yet when we're resting our breath stretches out and becomes more smooth. In many senses there is nothing more relaxing than meditation when it is going comfortably. There is little demand on the body and mind. So if it becomes very subtle this is a nice sign that things are calming down. If it happens just enjoy this too.

Further Explorations

The 4 Rhythms of Breathing:

1. Breathing In Long - Breathing Out Long
2. Breathing In Long - Breathing Out Short
3. Breathing In Short - Breathing Out Long
4. Breathing In Short - Breathing Out Short

Primarily rest with what feels most comfortable, some of the time also explore getting more comfortable with each rhythm.

Full Body Awareness

Sometime also experiment with letting your awareness flow deep within your body, filling all of your body so that no area is outside of your awareness. Feel the breath coming and going while also maintaining an awareness of the whole body breathing.

Stretching the Awareness

At other times experiment with stretching the body awareness outside the body also. In both these explorations we can experiment with primarily paying attention to the body awareness or its expanded nature and keeping it large, and let the breath be a little more in the background of our attention.

Exploring all of the Body

There are ways we can develop our capacity to relate to the breath as an energy. We can breath in and out of any area of the body directly. For breathing into the heart, we don't need to imagine the breath coming in and out of the nostrils and down the windpipe into the chest. It can come right to the heart from outside the body; through the chest, or back.

Or we can breathe in at the top of our head filling with breath energy down our body, and breathe out radiating from the whole body. Or breathe up from our feet, through the back of the body, up over the head and out of the heart area.

Innovation, Improvisation, Creativity and Play

We can find many ways to explore breathing, follow your intuition, what is invaluable though is to pay attention to how it affects our heart-mind experience of being. Does this open the experience? In what way?