



Mindfulness of the Breath

(Adapted from Jerold Hambright, Ph.D. & Russ Harris, Ph.D.)

Instructions: Have someone read this out loud to you or record yourself reading the script and play it back to yourself. Practice this for five minutes per day. Work on increasing the duration by two to three minutes every few days until you can do this for 15-20 minutes. While mindfulness is simple, it's not exactly easy. Keep practicing.

1. Bring your attention to your breath – the breath in and the breath out.
There is no need to change your breathing, simply let it be whatever it is
2. Follow the air as it comes in through your nostrils and goes down to the bottom of your lungs. Then follow it as it goes back out again
3. Follow the air, as if you're riding the waves of your breathing
4. Notice the air moving in and out of your nostrils ... how it's slightly warmer as it comes out, and cooler as it goes in
5. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your rib cage
6. Notice the gentle rise & fall of your abdomen (belly)
7. Fix your attention on one of these areas, whichever you prefer: on the breath moving in and out of the nostrils, on the rising & falling of the ribcage, or the rising & falling of the abdomen (belly)
8. Keep your attention here, noticing the movement - in and out – of the breath. Again, there is no need to change the pace or depth of your breathing. Just breath as you normally would.



Mindfulness of the Breath cont.

9. Whatever feelings, urges or sensations arise, whether pleasant or unpleasant, gently acknowledge them - as if nodding your head at people passing by you on the street. Gently acknowledge their presence and let them be. Allow them to come & go as they please and return your attention to the breath.

10. Whatever thoughts, images, or memories arise, whether comfortable or uncomfortable, simply acknowledge them and allow them to be. Let them come & go as they please and bring your attention to the breath.

11. From time to time, your attention will become distracted by thoughts or feelings. Each time this happens, notice what distracted you, then bring your attention back to the breath. No matter how often your attention "wanders off" - whether a hundred times, or a thousand - your aim is simply to note what distracted you and bring your attention back to the breath.

12. There is no need to be frustrated or impatient or disappointed when you get carried off by your thoughts. It is the same for everyone. Our minds naturally distract us from what we are doing. So, each time you realize your attention has wandered, gently acknowledge it, notice what distracted you, and bring your attention back to the breath.

13. If frustration, boredom, anxiety, impatience or other feelings arise, simply acknowledge them, and maintain your focus on the breath.

14. No matter how often your attention wanders, gently acknowledge it, note what distracted you, and gently bring your attention back to the breath.

15. When you are ready, thank yourself for practicing and then bring yourself back to the room and open your eyes.