

# MINDFUL BREATHING

The primary focus in Mindfulness Meditation is the breathing. However, the primary goal is a calm, nonjudging awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them. This creates calmness and acceptance.



- Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your spine reasonably straight.
- Direct your attention to your breathing.
- When thoughts, emotions, physical feelings or external sounds occur, simply accept them, giving them the space to come and go without judging or getting involved with them.
- When you notice that your attention has drifted off and is becoming caught up in thoughts or feelings, simply note that the attention has drifted, and then gently bring the attention back to your breathing.

It's ok and natural for thoughts to arise, and for your attention to follow them. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.

## **Breathing Meditation 1** (Kabat-Zinn 1996)

Assume a comfortable posture lying on your back or sitting. If you are sitting, keep the spine straight and let your shoulders drop.



Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.

Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the inbreath and fall or recede on the out-breath.

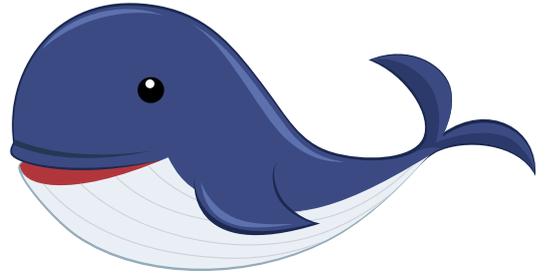
Keep your focus on the breathing, 'being with' each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding the waves of your own breathing.

Every time you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and the feeling of the breath coming in and out.

If your mind wanders away from the breath a thousand times, then your job is simply to bring it

back to the breath every time, no matter what it becomes preoccupied with.

Practise this exercise for fifteen minutes at a convenient time every day, whether you feel like it or not, for one week and see how it feels to incorporate a disciplined meditation practice into your life. Be aware of how it feels to spend some time each day just being with your breath without having to do anything.



### **Breathing Meditation 2** (Kabat-Zinn 1996)

- Tune into your breathing at different times during the day, feeling the belly go through one or two risings and fallings.
- Become aware of your thoughts and feelings at these moments, just observing them without judging them or yourself.
- At the same time, be aware of any changes in the way you are seeing things and feeling about yourself.