

Sitting Practice: Quiet the mind



PRACTICE:

This practice is an amazing simple way of quieting your mind giving stillness and clarity among stress or pressure. It will have relaxing effects and ultimately influence other areas of your life, such as being more mentally present; solving problems; experiencing a more restful sleep; creating calm among chaos; or having a more open mind. An open mind facilitates greater possibilities of understanding and decision-making. It's impossible to do this incorrectly, if done with sincerity. **You do not have to believe anything to do sitting.**

STRUCTURE:

Designate **5 minutes** each day to sit quietly without interruption. Feel free to increase the duration only after you successfully master 5 minutes. Within two weeks work up to 10 minutes. Consistency is the key. So stick to it as you practice and learn a new way of being. The more you practice, the greater your ability to spontaneously draw upon it for self-management whenever and wherever it's appropriate.

GUIDELINES:

Sit comfortably in a chair with a straight back and feet flat on the floor, or lay flat on a comfortable surface. Center your body, not leaning or slumped in any direction. Either close your eyes or gaze at a designated spot. Relax your jaw.

1. Bring awareness to your breath – either at the tip of your nostrils where the air enters and leaves your nose, or your mouth, or your chest which rises and falls as you breathe. Select the area most felt by you. Do not change your breathing, begin to observe it. Say quietly to yourself "in" when you inhale and "out" when you exhale.
2. Between breaths, bring your attention to where your body touches the chair and where your feet touch the floor. Acknowledge any sensations in your body and return your attention to your breathing. Conduct a physical self-check from top to bottom: notice if your shoulders are tight or relaxed; are your arms tense; can you feel the ridges of your finger prints; are your feet comfortable. Do the same with any emotions or feelings that may occur. Consistently focus your attention on your breath.
3. If you find your attention wandering, notice the thought without judgment or analysis and simply return to your breathing. You can simply say "though" and put it into your visual filing cabinet, close the drawer and bring your attention back to your breathing.

Check your posture. If you've slumped, then re-center yourself. Look for tension in your body and give it willingness to relax.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

It takes time and practice to develop a new way of being. The transformation is in the ongoing practice. Give yourself permission, space and time to have the experience. You will have many thoughts throughout the practice. Simply bring yourself back to checking-in with your body and your breathing. It will be your most challenging and rewarding five minutes.