

## Mindful Breathing



In a stressed state, it is easy to lose touch with inner peace, compassion and kindness. In a relaxed state, the mind clears and we connect with a deeper sense of purpose and altruism. Your breath is your best friend. Any time you feel stress rising, heart closing, mind going into overwhelm, just focus on your breathing.

Breathing with mindfulness allows us to come back to center again, to be here and now, grounded in the present moment. In Eastern traditions, one's breath is seen as the conduit between human life and the universal energy of the cosmos. Breathing is truly the essence of life, the link between our own bodies and the world around us.

### Following the Breath

One beautiful form of meditation is simply to follow the breath.

Sit comfortably, you may choose to close your eyes. Let yourself become aware of the physical sensation of the breath, feeling the shape, texture, and duration of the inhale and the exhale. Do not change your breathing, do not strain or push in any way.

Simply watch the breath breathe itself. Feel the rhythm of the breath, feel its timing, the end of the exhale, a short rest, the readiness to inhale.

When the mind wanders-as it will-do not worry. Simply return your awareness to the breath. Silently note each inhale or exhale, each rising and falling. Be with your breath with calm awareness.

Do this for five minutes at first. What do you notice about the rhythm of rest in your breathing? What do you notice about the rhythm of breath in your body?

Source: Wayne Mueller, Sabbath

### Box Breathing

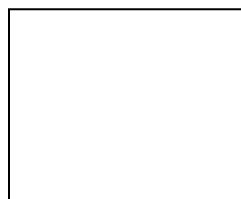
You may imagine drawing a box in the air, drawing one side of the box with each step of the practice.

Breathe in for 4 seconds...

Hold the breath for 4 seconds...

Breathe out for 4 seconds...

Empty of breath 4 seconds...



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Breathing is a good way to nourish body and mind with mindfulness. The practice of mindfulness is very simple. You stop, you breathe, and you still your mind. You come home to yourself so that you can enjoy the here and now in every moment.

-Thich Nhat Hahn, *Silence: The Power of Quiet In A World Full Of Noise*

You can practice this nourishing exercise while sitting or walking.

Breathing in, I know I'm breathing in.  
Breathing out, I know I'm breathing out.  
(In. Out.)

Breathing in, my breath grows deep.  
Breathing out, my breath grows slow.  
(Deep. Slow)

Breathing in, I am aware of my body.  
Breathing out, I calm my body.  
(Aware of body. Calming)

Breathing in, I smile.  
Breathing out, I release.  
(Smile. Release.)

Breathing in, I dwell in the present moment.  
Breathing out, I enjoy the present moment.  
(Present moment. Enjoy.)

A light smile relaxes all the muscles in your face and brings ease to body and mind, so don't just say the word "smile", really do it.

-Thich Nhat Hahn