

Mindful Breathing

Mindful Breathing:

1. Sit in a comfortable position. Try to sit in the same place each day. Avoid positions that you might fall asleep in.
 - a. The back is long and supports itself.
 - b. Shoulders are relaxed downward, the neck is long, and the chin is pointing neither up nor down.
 - c. The face is relaxed.
2. Inhale. Expand the belly, expand the ribs, and then let the breath rise all the way into the shoulders and collarbones. Feel a slight movement in the collarbones and shoulders as the breath moves upward. Exhale and feel the shoulders fall, ribs move back toward center, and belly move back into the spine. Do this for a minute or two.
3. Now focus on the breath as it enters and exits the nostrils. Feel the coolness of the breath as it enters, the warmth as it exits. Listen for the slight sound of the breath as it enters and exits. Feel the movement of the breath on the delicate skin at the rim of the nostrils.
4. When the mind wanders or a sound or sensation distracts you, return to the breath. Do this over and over as many times as you need to.
5. Start with 5 minutes, then increase the time until you can sit for 10, then 15, then 20 minutes.

Mindful Breathing Phase Two:

1. When you can do the three-part breath comfortably, create a valve at the larynx to make a gentle hissing sound as you exhale. When you whisper, you make this same valve.
2. Begin to prolong the exhalation. Work toward making the exhalation twice as long as the inhalation. Take your time in cultivating this lengthening of the exhalation. The breath should remain gentle and rhythmic.
3. Now focus on the breath as it enters and exits the nostrils. Feel the coolness of the breath as it enters, the warmth as it exits. Listen for the slight sound of the breath as it enters and exits. Feel the movement of the breath on the delicate skin at the rim of the nostrils.
4. When the mind wanders or a sound or sensation distracts you, return to the breath. Do this over and over as many times as you need to.
5. Start with 5 minutes, then increase the time until you can sit for 10, then 15, then 20 minutes.

Mindful Breathing Phase Three:

1. Begin to notice as you do the above breath that there are four phases to the breath:
 - a. Inhalation
 - b. A pause between inhalation and exhalation
 - c. Exhalation
 - d. A pause between exhalation and inhalation
2. Try and live inside the pauses for just a moment, less than a second. Bring your entire attention inside the pause before you begin either the inhalation or exhalation.
3. Now focus on the breath as it enters and exits the nostrils. Feel the coolness of the breath as it enters, the warmth as it exits. Listen for the slight sound of the breath as it enters and exits. Feel the movement of the breath on the delicate skin at the rim of the nostrils. Bring this same attention to all four phases of the breath.
4. When the mind wanders or a sound or sensation distracts you, return to the breath. Do this over and over as many times as you need to.
5. Start with 5 minutes, then increase the time until you can sit for 10, then 15, then 20 minutes.