

Mindful Breathing



Mindful breathing is a simple meditation practice you can use any place, any time. The primary goal is simply a calm, non-judging awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them. Ready?

- ◆ Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your spine reasonably straight. You can do this at your desk, sitting on the floor, or even in bed before sleep.
- ◆ Bring your attention to your breathing. Don't try to change or control anything. Just notice.
- ◆ Imagine that you have a balloon in your belly. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates. Notice the sensations in your abdomen as the balloon inflates and deflates. Your abdomen rising with the in-breath, and falling with the out-breath.
- ◆ Thoughts will come into your mind, and that's okay, because that's just what the human mind does. Simply notice those thoughts, then bring your attention back to your breathing. No judgment. No criticism.
- ◆ Likewise, you can notice sounds, physical feelings, and emotions, and again, just bring your attention back to your breathing. Don't try to change anything. There is no "right" way to feel.
- ◆ You don't have to follow those thoughts or feelings, don't judge yourself for having them, or analyse them in any way. It's okay for the thoughts to be there. Just notice those thoughts, and let them drift on by, bringing your attention back to your breathing.
- ◆ Whenever 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 okay and natural for thoughts to enter into your awareness, and for your attention to follow them. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing. Try to practice for 5 minutes in the beginning. It doesn't sound like much, but you will start to see the benefits it brings to your body and mind. You can add more time as you become more comfortable.

That's it. That's the whole practice. Not so hard, right?