

Mindfulness of Breathing – Instructions

1. Sit in a comfortable posture, with your spine erect; let the shoulders drop.
2. Close your eyes if it feels comfortable.
3. Bring your awareness to body sensations, by focusing your attention on the sensations of touch, contact and pressure in your body where it makes contact with the floor and whatever you are sitting on. Spend a few minutes exploring these sensations, just as in the body scan.
4. Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the in-breath and fall or recede on the out-breath.
5. Keep the focus on your breathing, 'being with' each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding on the waves of your own breathing.
6. Every time that you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, softly notice what it was that took you away and then gently escort your attention back to your belly and the feeling of the breath coming in and out.
7. If your mind wanders 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. It is just as valuable to become aware that your mind has wandered and to bring it back to the breath, as it is to remain aware of the breath.

(Adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn, 'Full Catastrophe Living', Piatkus: London, 1996, p. 58)

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean...
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and
down -
who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes
her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into
the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the
fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

Mary Oliver: 'New and Selected Poems' (Boston: Beacon Press. 1992)

Pleasant Events Diary

Be aware of a pleasant event at the time it is happening. Use these questions to focus your awareness on the details of the experience as it is happening. Write it down as soon as possible afterwards.

Day	What was the experience?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What thoughts or images accompanied this event? (write thoughts in words, describe images)	What mood, feelings, and emotions accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?
Mon	EXAMPLE <i>Heading home at the end of my shift – stopping, hearing a bird singing</i>	<i>Lightness across the face, aware of shoulders dropping, uplift of corners of mouth</i>	<i>'That's good' 'How lovely' (the bird) 'It's so good to be outside'</i>	<i>Relief, pleasure</i>	<i>'It was such a small thing, but I'm glad I noticed it'</i>