



RECOVERY DHARMA

Basic Meditation

with Awareness of Sound, Feeling Tone,
Body Sensations, Processes of the Mind

You can use the script below to lead yourself or others through a meditation. It begins with awareness of breath, which can be a complete practice on its own. There are also optional extensions you can use to practice with Awareness of Sound, Awareness of Feeling Tone, Awareness of Body Senses, or Awareness of Processes of the Mind. Read the meditation until you come to the ☸ symbol, then continue with the following meditation you selected.

Sit in a comfortable but attentive posture, allowing your back to be straight but not rigid or stiff. Feel your head balanced on your shoulders, allow you face and jaw to relax, with arms and hands resting in a comfortable position.

Be attentive to what's happening within your own awareness, right here and right now, without judgment.

As you sit, begin to notice the **sensations of breath**. Pay attention for a moment to how your abdomen moves on each in-breath and out-breath, the movement of air through your nostrils, the slight movement of your chest and shoulders.

Find the spot in your body where the sensation of breathing is most vivid, whether it be your abdomen, your chest or your shoulders, or the movement of air through your nostrils. See how fully aware you can be of your whole cycle of breathing, recognizing that each part of the cycle is different from the other part.

(pause)

You will notice your attention shifting away from the breath from time to time. It's perfectly normal for thoughts to wander into fantasies, memories, worries, or things you need to do. When you notice your mind has wandered, try to meet it with a spirit of friendliness. You don't need to *do* anything about it. There is nothing to *fix*. Rather than forcing it, just try to allow yourself to become curious about what it's like to be breathing right now, and you'll find that the attention is naturally drawn back to the physical sensations of breath as it moves through your body.

Stay alert, relaxed, and above all, compassionate, as you maintain awareness of where the mind goes. Each time you notice the mind has been distracted or has wandered, gently shift your awareness back to sensations of breath.

(pause)

Notice the tendency to want to control your breathing. Let the quality of attention be light and easy, one of simply observing and noticing. You don't need to control the duration, intensity, pace, or the pause between each breath. Just be present.

(pause)



As this meditation comes to an end, recognize that you spent this time intentionally aware of your moment to moment experience, building the capacity for opening the senses to the vividness, to the change, to the aliveness of the present moment, expanding your skill to be curious about, and open to, whatever presents itself, without judgment.

Then, whenever you're ready, allow your eyes to open and gently bring your attention back to the space you're in.

Awareness of Sound

🌀 You may notice that there are **sounds** that come from inside or outside the space you're in, sounds of traffic, the movement of others in the room, or something else going on. If your attention has been drawn by the sound, just be aware of it. Stay with it long enough to notice the quality of the sound--vibration, tone, volume or intensity--being aware of the urge of the mind to label sound: as traffic, as voices, as music, etc. Try to experience the sound without the labels we put on it. Practice recognizing it as just vibrations in the eardrums, just hearing.

Once you've noticed the sound, let it go and bring your attention back to the breath. Let your breath be your anchor of awareness. Each time your awareness goes somewhere else, you can just gently come back to breath, without judgment.

Awareness of Feeling Tone

🌀 Notice the tendency to **have an opinion** about things--liking the way things are going right now, not liking it, or sometimes feeling neutral. This tendency can also be an object of awareness. We can practice just noticing that there is an opinion or feeling about how things are *right now*.

When you notice the sensation of liking or pleasure, you can silently tell yourself, "So, this is my liking mind," or "Hello, attachment." When you notice the sensation of not liking, you may know, "So that's my critical mind," or "Hello, aversion," or "So this is what it feels like to want things to be different than they are." We can learn how to notice our pleasant and unpleasant feelings about thoughts and experiences, without judgement and without having to do anything about it.

As you notice that happening, just bring your awareness back to the physical sensations of breath wherever it's most vivid for you, just riding the entire cycle of breathing, one cycle after another.

Awareness of Body Sensations

☸ You may notice your attention shifting to **body sensations** -- coolness or warmth, the pressure of your seat on the chair or cushion, maybe achiness, discomfort, or tension. As you become aware of each sensation, notice precisely where it is in the body. Try to notice it in its fullness, how your experience is in this moment with the actual physical sensations of pressure, throbbing, warmth, pulling, or tingling, without judgment or labels. Just notice that it's possible to stay for a moment longer with that sensation, experienced as pure sensation, without the labels of good or bad, pleasurable or unpleasurable. Can you stay with the experience without having to react to it? Just for this moment, be curious about it: How big is it? Does the sensation have a texture or weight? What quality does it have? How is it changing over time? If there is a strong feeling of physical discomfort that is making it hard to stay focused on the breath, pause before acting on the impulse to move. Bring full awareness to the feeling, and once you're aware of where that is and understand your intention to change the discomfort, move with full mindfulness of your action.

Awareness of Processes of the Mind

☸ As you meditate, notice **where the mind goes**, in terms of thoughts; liking or disliking; perceptions or sensation; hearing of sound; or feelings of peace, sadness, joy, frustration, or anticipation. Just notice these raw thought forms, and then return awareness to sensations of the movement of breath.

If your mind has gone off on a fantasy, thought, judgment, worry, sensation, or sound, just notice in a friendly way that this is happening and come back to the breath. Recognize that the awareness of the distraction is important to this experience, both the movement away from breath and the coming back.

Notice how one thought leads to another, and then another. In those moments when you get lost in thought or your awareness goes somewhere else, see if it is possible to notice the moment when that flicker of awareness happens, when you recognize that your mind has wandered. *This* is a moment of mindfulness. You can acknowledge yourself for noticing you've gone somewhere else, and then just easily bring your attention back to breath in a friendly and non-judgmental way.