

## Acceptance

There are two parts to this meditation. We begin with mindfulness of breathing, practising this for about 5 minutes in order for the mind and body to settle a little. Then, when the mind and body are calm and quiet, use the acceptance instructions to help you work with any unpleasant bodily sensations that come up during the meditation.

### MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING

Sit upright in your chair. Try not to lean against the back of the chair. Following these guidelines will allow your breath to flow more easily and deeply:

- Your back should be straight with shoulder and hips level.
- Shoulders should be relaxed.
- Head is upright with your neck straight.
- Chin is tilted slightly down with eyes gazing at the floor at about a 45-degree angle.
- Eyes are only partially closed, and the gaze is softened.
- Hands are resting lightly on the thighs with palms face down.

Try to sit as still as possible during the mindfulness of breathing meditation. You can make small adjustments to your posture if you find that you've begun to slump or that your body has begun to lean a little. However, if you find yourself squirming and moving around a bit, it will be more difficult for the body and mind to settle down.

### ACCEPTANCE INSTRUCTIONS

After sitting still for a little while, you notice the urge to move in response to some physical discomfort. This might be an itch, an unpleasant sensation in your back, tension, or restlessness. Normally you would scratch the itch or move around to feel more comfortable. For this exercise, however, resist the urge to do so. Remain sitting and not moving except for breathing in and out. (Pause)>

Now turn your attention away from your breathing and to the part of the body experiencing discomfort. Maintaining your awareness, notice:

- Shape.... colour (if any) .... quality.... and/or intensity of the sensation.
- As you continue to breathe in and out, how do the sensations stay the same ..... or change, moment after moment?
- Make an effort to relax and remain open to these various sensations.
- Allow yourself to explore the feeling of the sensations .... having some curiosity about them.

Thoughts and emotions will arise during the meditation. They may even be a little charged, such as "oh, I am in such pain" or "I have to scratch, or I'm going to go crazy." Don't get hooked by these thoughts or get upset or anxious. Often thoughts or emotions stoke the fires and can actually make the experience of the sensations seem worse than it is. Gently let go of the thoughts or emotions and bring your attentions back to the physical sensations and the breath. (Pause)

*(continued)*

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Other thoughts that may arise that have nothing to do with the discomfort. They might be about things you need to do tomorrow, money issues, family commitments, and so on. Regardless of the content, let these thoughts or emotions go also, and gently allow your awareness to return to the breath and bodily sensations. (Pause)

Accept the sensations that your body is experiencing in this moment as just a sensation. Nothing worse, nothing less. Pleasant or unpleasant. Whatever your experience is in this moment – acknowledge and openly accept the physical fact of it in this fleeting moment. (Pause)

**HOME PRACTICE**

As a reminder, daily meditation can range from 10 to 40 minutes. Typically, it can take about 20 minutes to “settle down.” However, even brief periods of meditation are better than none. In your daily meditation practice, make an effort to use acceptance when any physical discomfort arises so that you develop skill in being present and nonreactive to it. Then when cravings and urges arise in your daily life, it is more likely that you can respond with acceptance and calm to those sensations instead of by drinking and using.