

The Practice of Mindfulness Meditation

According to the
Visuddhimagga

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DAILY PRACTICE

*Observe
Understand
Be Free*

*Mindfulness
Brings Clarity
Compassion
and Lasting
Peace*

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Mindfulness Sitting Instructions

After assuming a comfortable seated posture, gently close your eyes.

Shift your attention to the belly, observing its natural movement. If it simply moves, observe it with the label “knowing.” Then, when it expands outward, label it as “ri...sing,” and when it moves inward, label it as “fal...ling.” Stay with this observation, focusing on the “rising” and “falling” as they happen naturally, as long as it goes mindfully.

Upon hearing a sound or smelling an odor, beginners should observe it a few times with the mental note “hearing” or “smelling,” then return your attention to the abdominal movement. For other objects, observe them one at a time mindfully, with a neutral feeling, as long as they last or until your attention naturally shifts to another object.

When a thought arises, observe it with a mental note “thinking, planning, imagining, analyzing” etc...without embellishment.

If the thought ceases or fades naturally by itself while maintaining continuous attention, return to observe the abdominal movement.

If any bodily sensations such as pain, soreness, numbness, stiffness, tingling, tightness, itching, tension, or discomfort arise, observe each sensation one by one, continuously.

Meanwhile, observe any physical discomfort that arises with a mental note. When the sensation ceases or diminishes naturally, return to observing the movement at the abdomen.

If emotional feelings of distress or joy arise such as: frustration, impatience, irritation, anger, contentment, joy, sadness, liking, disliking, neutrality, calmness, lightness, ease, etc... observe these feelings with mental note seriously and continuously with a non-judgmental mind mindfully.

When each of these emotional states naturally fade or cease by themselves, return to observe the abdominal movement. When drowsiness, lethargy, restlessness, or boredom arise, observe these feelings seriously with a mental note. When each one of these feelings naturally fade or cease by themselves, return to observe the abdominal movement. Upon seeing anything, simply observe with mental note “seeing”.

When the visual perception fades or ceases naturally, return to observe the movement at the abdomen.

Observe each sensation, perception, or feeling one by one, as each phenomena arises, without greed and aversion,

observing sincerely and continuously with a mental note without a non-judgmental mind. This will gradually cultivate insight, leading to clear comprehension of the truth, allowing the mind to develop meditative concentration sequentially, until one can express the fruition of insight knowledge with certainty.

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**Begin Your
Practice**

Post-Meditation Interview/Notes

1. Session Duration
How long did you sit/walk?
2. Body Sensations : Abdominal Movement: Describe the symptoms (rising, falling). How did they change after you observed and labeled them? For example: short, long, equal, unequal, small, large, rolling, shaking, etc.
3. Feelings : Describe sensations such as pain, tingling, numbness, stiffness, itching, suffering, or feeling bothered. How did they change after you observed and labeled them? For example: getting stronger, getting lighter, moving to the same or different area, etc.

4. Thoughts : Describe your thoughts, distracted thoughts, imaginations, contemplations, likes, and dislikes. How did they change after you observed and labeled them? For example: long thought, short thought, analyzing, imagining, etc.

5. Mental Functions : Describe states such as lethargy, contentment, dissatisfaction, doubt, calmness, seeing, hearing, smelling, etc. How did they change after you observed and labeled them? For example: noted then disappeared, stayed for a short time, stayed for a long time, etc.

The Purpose of Vipassanā Meditation

Vipassanā meditation is the practice of cultivating continuous mindfulness to observe the body and mind exactly as they are. Its purpose is not to seek extraordinary experiences, but to develop wisdom through direct observation of present-moment experience. As mindfulness becomes stronger and more continuous, practitioners gradually see the changing nature of all physical and mental phenomena with increasing clarity.

Understanding the Three Characteristics

Through sustained observation, practitioners gradually develop insight into the **Three Characteristics of Existence (Tilakkhaṇa)**:

- **Impermanence (Anicca)**: All physical and mental phenomena continually arise and pass away.
- **Unsatisfactoriness (Dukkha)**: Whatever is conditioned cannot provide lasting satisfaction.
- **Non-self (Anattā)**: Physical and mental processes occur according to causes and conditions and are not a permanent or independent self.

As this understanding deepens through direct experience, attachment and clinging gradually diminish, allowing greater inner peace, emotional balance, and freedom to arise naturally.

Realizing the Four Noble Truths

With continuous and diligent practice, meditators gradually begin to understand the **Four Noble Truths** through direct experience rather than through intellectual knowledge alone. They recognize the presence of suffering within both body and mind, understand that its principal causes are craving, attachment, and ignorance, and discover that suffering gradually ceases as these causes are abandoned.

By cultivating mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom as taught in the **Noble Eightfold Path**, practitioners progress toward the cessation of suffering—the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice.

Cultivating the Four Divine Abodes

As wisdom develops, the practice naturally nourishes the **Four Divine Abodes (Brahmavihāras)**:

- **Loving-kindness (Mettā)**: Unconditional goodwill toward oneself and all beings.
- **Compassion (Karuṇā)**: The sincere wish to relieve the suffering of others.
- **Sympathetic Joy (Muditā)**: Rejoicing in the happiness and success of others without jealousy.
- **Equanimity (Upekkhā)**: A balanced and peaceful mind that remains steady amid both pleasant and unpleasant experiences.

These wholesome qualities gradually become integrated into daily life, supporting healthier relationships, emotional resilience, compassionate action, and enduring inner peace.

Conclusion

Vipassanā is a gradual training of the mind. Through patient and consistent practice, mindfulness gives rise to concentration, concentration supports the development of wisdom, and wisdom weakens greed, hatred, and delusion. As these defilements diminish, the mind experiences increasing freedom, peace, and clarity.

“May this practice lead to wisdom, compassion, and lasting peace for the benefit of yourself and all beings.”

Reference: *This guide is based on the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, drawing upon the Pāli Canon and the Visuddhimagga.*