

## Mindful Breathing

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The intention of this brief exercise is to focus your attention on your breath as you allow thoughts and sensations to come and go in the background.

Find a comfortable place to sit. Put your feet flat on the ground and try to straighten your posture. Gently close your eyes. Let your shoulders drop down and away from your ears.

Pay attention to your breathing and just allow yourself to continue to breathe naturally.

Now, rest your hands gently on your belly with the fingertips of each hand lightly touching in the middle.

Breathe in smoothly through your nose. And exhale slowly through your mouth. Continue to take slow, smooth breaths.

When you breathe in, notice your belly push your hands gently apart, as you fill your lower lungs with air. When you breathe out, notice your belly sink back towards your spine as you release your breath. You can imagine that your belly is a balloon. Fill it with air and then watch it deflate.

Now continue to focus on the gentle inhalation and exhalation of your breath. In...and out...

If any other thoughts or images come into your mind during this exercise, just notice them, and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

You may also become aware of physical sensations or feelings in your body. Simply notice them, and then again, bring your mind back to your breath. You don't need to analyze or give these thoughts or feelings any meaning in this moment. Simply acknowledge them without judgment and bring your mind back to your breath.

It's normal for your mind to wander. Simply notice that your mind has wandered and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Continue to focus on your breathing and stay in this relaxed state for as long as you like. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and bring your attention back to your surroundings.