

Basic Mindfulness Meditation – Meditation on the Breath (aka Vipassana Meditation)

1. If possible, find a quiet place to meditate. It will not be possible to find a totally quiet place, as background noises - the refrigerator, air conditioner, cars passing by, etc. - are a fact of life.
2. Sit in any position that is comfortable to you. It is not necessary to go into the Lotus Pose with the legs contorted into a pretzel. Most people aren't able to do this pose anyway. The important thing is to be comfortable.
3. Sit with your back as straight as possible.
4. Close your eyes.
5. Begin paying attention to your breath and try to stay focused on it only. There are two ways to do this: (a) concentrate on the sensation of air coming into and out of the nostrils, or (b) concentrate on the movement of the abdomen/lungs as air enters into and departs the body.
6. You will soon notice that your mind will want to wander. When you notice that your mind has gotten off the subject of the breath, simply bring your attention back to the breath. Don't become frustrated or angry with yourself over the fact that you've lost your concentration - it is the nature of the mind to wander. One way to keep your attention on your breathing is to count breaths. Count one inhale and exhale as one breath. Count up to ten breaths and then start over again with one.
7. When dealing with stray thoughts, the important thing to remember is to be aware of what you are thinking of from a "distanced" point of view. That is, simply notice the thoughts without getting caught up in the subject matter, then come back to awareness of breathing.
8. Try to meditate every day. Start out meditating for ten minutes and work your way up to twenty.

The purpose of meditation is to increase awareness/mindfulness. That is, awareness and mindfulness of the human ego and its influence on our thoughts, words, and deeds.