

Stress Management and Mindfulness

Breath Awareness - INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT

Welcome to a practice of mindful Breath Awareness. I will be guiding you through a seated practice, but breath awareness can be practiced while lying on your bed or on the floor. Before you begin, make sure to find a space where there is no distraction – a place that you can get comfortable and focus for a few minutes without interruption. If you're seated, scoot toward the back of your chair. Adjust your body and allow yourself to settle in.

Before we really move into the practice of breath awareness, let's set an intention to calm the mind and relax the body.

Bringing your hands to your thighs, palms up, relax the elbows back toward the back of the chair. If it's comfortable, gently close your eyes, or you can simply allow your eyes to relax and your gaze soften. Begin to drop the chin slightly, feeling the back of the neck lengthening. Drop the shoulders down and back, away from the ears.

Now, let's begin to notice the breath, drawing the focus inward. Without making any changes to your breathing, pay attention to the sensations in your body with each inhalation and exhalation.

Watch your breath and begin to feel your breath. Notice where you feel the breath in your body. Do you feel it in your nose, throat or chest? Perhaps the ribcage or the belly?

If it's comfortable, begin to breath in and out through your nose. Inhaling and exhaling through the nose – an easy, comfortable breath.

Draw the breath into the lowest part of the belly, feeling movement there. As you inhale, the belly gently rounds; with the exhale, the belly button moves inward and then gently upward toward the heart. Inhale, and then exhale - allowing the exhalation to become a gentle outward push to rid the body of toxins and stale air. The inhalation becomes a relaxing of the belly muscles - a release and replenishing. Exhaling and inhaling to a 4 count – evening out the rhythm of your breath.

Let's make a change. Inhale, then begin to lengthen your exhale, breathing out the mouth. Breathe in through the nose, and then exhale longer through the mouth with pursed lips, like you are breathing out through a straw. Breathe in through the nose, fully filling the lungs and the belly, and slowly breathe out like you are blowing up a large balloon. Enjoy a shorter inward breath and a longer outward breath. Inhale and count to 4, exhaling to a 6 or even an 8 count.

As we return to more natural, easy breathing, notice, does your body feel softer or more relaxed? Are you feeling lighter – either physically or in your thoughts? Maybe your body is heavy with relaxation and calm.

Feel free to open your eyes as you begin to shift your body. We are waking back up to awareness, back into the room.

This is what breath awareness or alignment with the breath feels like. Pretty simple, isn't it? Notice how you are feeling. Remember, the more you practice, the easier focusing and guiding the breath becomes.