

BREATHING EXERCISE

MINDFUL BREATHING EXERCISES can be helpful in over coming anxiety and stress and also serve as an underlying support for meditation. The more you practice this exercise the more quickly you can slip into it when you most need it.

Step One:

1. First make yourself comfortable, sitting with your back straight, and well supported, with your feet flat on the floor. If you wish to do this standing, that is ok too. Relax your face muscles, shoulders, hands and knees.
2. Close your eyes, or if you prefer, lower them without focusing on anything in particular.
3. First take three deep breaths – in through the nose and out through your mouth with a full exhalation. Now continue breathing normally without forcing your breath in any way, but on your in-breath, imagine a soft light moving from a point just above the eyebrows down to a point just below the navel.
4. On your out-breath imagine the light moving back up from just below the navel to the point above your eyebrows.
5. Between each in-breath and out-breath, allow a small pause.
6. Continue until you feel your breathing become calm and settled.

When extraneous thoughts intervene, just let them go by bringing your attention back to the movement of the soft light.

Step Two:

Once your breathing is settled imagine the light now going further down, below the navel to the base of the spine, and on the out-breath up to the top of your head. On the in-breath imagine the light moving down again from the crown of the head to the base of your spine. Remember to allow a very short pause before releasing the breath.

Remember not to rush your breathing. Nothing must be forced.

Step Three:

Now, on your in-breath, imagine a light coming from far above you, down through the top of your head and into your heart, filling it with warm radiant light. On the out-breath imagine this light streaming out from your chest into the world. Again, remember the small pauses in the rhythm and don't force your breathing. When thoughts intrude, just come back to the movement of the light.

