

How To Meditate Correctly

From A Real Novice Monk



Everything You Should Know!

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I certainly do.

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Otherwise, just read, learn and enjoy your new life with meditation 😊

Introduction

In this eBook, I am going to talk about the way to meditate properly the Buddhist way (Theravada). This is taken directly from a novice monk who taught me some interesting things about meditation that I did not know.



He has given me permission to use this article.

If you want to find out why you should try meditation, [check out some other posts](#) about the health benefits of meditation.

So let's begin...

How To Start Meditating

Mindfulness

Sit up straight with all the vertebrae of the spine fitting together snugly and in an upright but comfortable position. Keep the head up right, with the eyes looking toward the tip of the nose; it doesn't really matter if you see the tip or not, just gaze in the direction of the nose or past it.



Once you get used to it, the results will be better than closing the eyes and you won't be inclined to fall asleep so easily.

People who are sleepy (such as those doing early morning meditation), will benefit from keeping the eyes open at the beginning rather than closing them. Regular and consistent practice will ensure that over time your eyes will close by themselves when your body is ready.

Lay your hands in your lap with one on top of the other, or lay them comfortably on your thighs or knees. Whichever way is most simple and comfortable for you.

Overlap or cross the legs in a way that distributes and holds your weight well so that you can sit comfortably and will not fall over easily.

You can overlap your legs if you prefer or are able to do so. Stout people can find crossing their legs in what is called the diamond posture (lotus posture) somewhat more difficult; but any way is OK and fancy postures are not necessary.

Merely sit with the back upright and the legs folded so that weight is evenly balanced and you cannot tip over easily-that's good enough. The more difficult and serious postures can be left for when one gets serious, like a yogi!

In special circumstance-when you are sick, not feeling well, or just tired, you can rest against something, sit on a chair, or use a deck chair, in order to recline a bit. Those who are sick can even lie down to meditate. You can also meditate while standing.

It is important to sit in a place with good air circulation (the reason why you see so many pictures of meditating people outside), where you can breathe comfortably. There should be nothing overly disturbing, but don't expect perfect quiet.

Loud noises which are steady and have no meaning, such as the sound of the waves or the wind in the trees are no problem unless you attach to them a problem and remember things in the past that will affect you in the present. Sound with meaning, such as people speaking, are more of a problem for those just learning to practice. However, if you can't find a quiet place, pretend there aren't any sounds. Just be determined to practice and as with everything, including meditation, practice makes perfect.

As your eyes look toward the tip of your nose, you can gather your awareness, or Sati as it's called in Buddhist language, in order to catch and note your own breathing in and out. Those who feel like closing their eyes will probably do so from here on. Those prefer to leave the eyes open, will do so continually until the eyes gradually close on their own as concentration and calmness (Samadhi) increases.

Some Mediation Jargon

Sati is a key term in Buddhist meditation. It means:

- ✓ Recall
- ✓ Recollection
- ✓ Full awareness
- ✓ Attention
- ✓ Mindfulness

All of these things concern the present and do not involve memory or thought. In this article, the activity of Sati can be translated as awareness or mindfulness, (Sati does not mean to concentrate or focus, which is Samadhi). From the study these various words and their meanings in each context, you will have a correct understanding of Sati. From this you will know how to use it and free yourself from Dukkha (pain and suffering).

Breathing

To make it easier to note your breathing in the beginning, you can try to breathe for as long and as deeply as you can either through the nose or mouth; whichever is most comfortable. Force it in and out strongly without causing pain, many times. This will help you to know clearly for yourself what your body rubs against or touches as it draws in and out along its path.

In other words, try notice where your breath appears to end in your belly by taking the physical sensations as your measure rather than an anatomical picture in your head. However, don't be tense, too strict or too precise. Your meditation should always be relaxed and natural.

Make your mind just like something which chases after or stalks the breathing like a tiger or a hunter, unwilling to part with its prize. This is the first step of our practice, we call it "constantly chasing after (or stalking)"

Earlier I mentioned to begin by trying to make the breathing as long as possible and as strong and vigorous possible, many times over from the very start. This is in order to find the end points and the path your breath follows between them.

Once the mind can catch and fix the breathing in and out by constantly being aware of how the breath touches and flows, where it ends, then how it turns back either inside or outside, you can gradually relax the breathing until it becomes normal and natural. Let the dance your breath dances become normal and natural.

There will no longer be any need to force or control the breathing at all once you have become aware of it and have a steady and regular pattern. Sati fixes on the breathing the whole time, just as it did earlier with rough and strong breathing but now more calmly.

Sati is able to pay attention to the entire path of the breath from the inner end point or the navel, to the outer end point at the tip of the nose or the upper lip. Fix your attention on your breathing again, until Sati is aware of it without any gaps.

Make sure it can be done well, that is to say you must keep practicing until ordinary, unforced breathing can be properly maintained. However long or short it is, you will know it, however

heavy or light it is, you will just know. Know it clearly within that very awareness as Sati merely holds closely to and follows back and forth with the breathing the whole time you are meditating.

Don't try to push other things out of awareness that will just create tension. Keep your attention centered on breathing in a balanced way, one breath at a time. Let go of anything that takes you away from the rhythm of your breathing.

Lack of success is due to the inability of Sati (or attention) to stay with the breathing the whole time. You don't know when you lost track or when your mind ran off home.

Once you are aware of what happened, catch the rhythm again. Gently bring it back and practice until successful on this level. Do it for at least ten minutes each session before going on to the next step.

The Next Step

The next step how to start meditating and the second level of preparation, is called “waiting in ambush at one point.” It’s best to practice this second step only after the first step can be achieved with a high level of proficiency in order to gain the full benefit, but anyone who feels as though they are able skip straight to this point can do so.



At this stage, Sati lies in waiting, at a particular point and stops chasing after the breathing. You will switch to this level or method, by noting the sensation where the breathing enters the body and remain there as it flows all the way to the navel, then let go of this outer point (the tip of the nose) and remain at the inner point.

Remain here until the exhalation contacts the other end point (the tip of the nose) and remain there for the rest of the exhalation. Then let go or leave it alone when the breathing contacts the inner end point again. Continue like this without changing anything.

In moments of letting go, the mind doesn't run away back home, the fields, the office, or anywhere. This means that Sati pays attention at the two end points-both inner and outer-and doesn't pay attention to anything between them.

When you can securely go back and forth between the two end points without paying attention to things in between, level off with the inner end point and focus only at the outer point. Now,



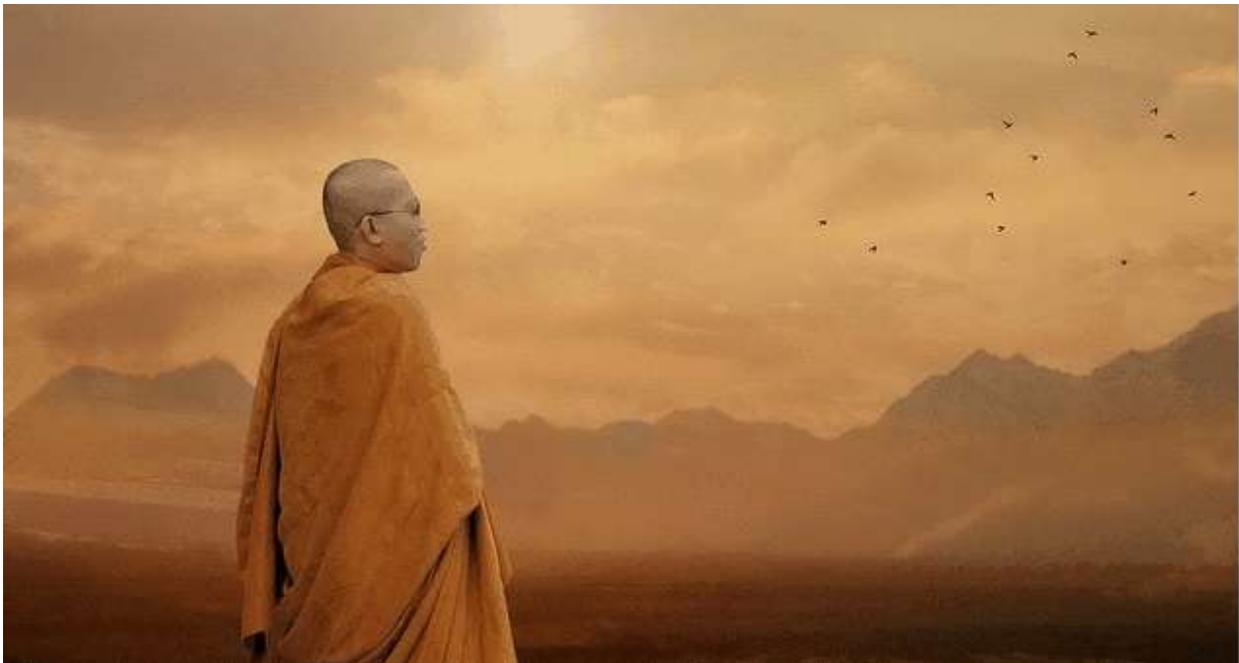
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Sati consistently watches only at the tip of the nose. Whether the breathing strikes while inhaling or while exhaling, feel it and know it every time. This is called “**Guarding The Gate**”.

There’s a feeling as the breathing passes in or out; the rest of the way is left void or quiet. If you have time, be aware of the tip of the nose. The breathing becomes increasingly calm and quiet, thus you can’t feel movements other than at the tip.

Don't Let Your Mind Run Away

Lack of success occurs when the mind runs away without you knowing. It doesn't return as it should. Or after entering the gate, it sneaks all the way inside. Both of these errors happen because the period of emptiness or quiet is incorrect and incomplete. This means that you have not done it properly since the start of this step.



Therefore, you ought to practice carefully from the very first step in order to lay a good foundation in your practice. Try it again until you get it. Remember:

- ↗ Again
- ↗ Again
- ↗ Again
- ↗ Again
- ↗ Gain

Even at the beginning, the step called “constantly chasing after”, is not easy for everyone. Yet when one can do it, the results, both physical and mental, are beyond expectations. So making yourself go past the first stage and being able to do it consistently until it becomes fun and pleasurable, will yield fantastic results. If you have just two minutes, by all means practice. Breathe forcefully, if your bones crack or rattle that’s even better. Breathe strongly until it whistles, a little noise won’t hurt. Then gradually relax and lighten it until it finds its natural level.

The ordinary breathing of most people is not natural or normal, but is actually quite shallow without us being conscious of it. Especially when we do certain activities or are in positions which are restricted, our breathing is coarser than it ought to be, we just don’t know it. So you should start with strong, vigorous breathing first, then let it relax until it becomes natural. In this way, you’ll end up with breathing which is the “middle way” or just right.

Such breathing makes the body natural, and healthy and it is fit for use as the object of meditation at the beginning of Anapanasati (Mindfulness of Breathing). Let us stress once more that this kind of preparation should be practiced until it is natural for us in all circumstances. This will lead to numerous physical and mental benefits.

The difference between “constantly chasing after” and “waiting in ambush at one place” is not so great. The latter is a little more relaxed and subtle. That is to say the area noted by Sati decreases. To make this easier to understand, we’ll use the simile of the mother rocking the baby’s hammock.

At first, when the child has just been put in the hammock, it isn’t sleepy yet and will try to get out. At this stage, the mother must watch the hammock carefully. As it swings from side to side, her head must turn from left to right so that the child won’t be out of sight for a moment.

Once the baby begins to get sleep and doesn't try to get out anymore, the mother need not turn her head from left to right, back and forth, as the hammock swings. The mother only watches when the hammock passes in front of her face, which is good enough. Watching only at one point while the hammock is directly in front of her, the baby won’t have a chance to get out of the hammock just the same, because the child is ready to fall asleep. (Although the baby may fall asleep, the mediator should not!)

In fact, our breathing tends to be unhealthy which contributes to many physical and mental problems. Please learn to breathe freely and naturally. It may require time and patience, but the nature of us all is to breathe and live freely, peacefully.



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The first stage of preparation in noting the breathing or “constantly chasing after”, is like when the mother must turn her head from side to side with the swinging hammock so that it isn't out of sight for moment.

The second stage where the breathing is noted at the nose tip or “waiting and watching at one point “, is like when the baby is really to sleep and the mother watches than hammock only when it passes right in front of her.

The Third Stage

When you have practiced and trained fully in the second step, you can train further by making the area noted by Sati even more subtle and gentle until you achieve a secure and stable level of concentration. Concentration can then be deepened step by step until attaining one of the Jhanas (a heightened level of concentration), which is beyond the relatively easy concentration of the first steps and is rather difficult for most people.

The Jhanas are states of one-pointedness (unification-integration) which result from highly developed concentration that has turned inward. In them one is only aware of a particular object and certain mental factors, but nothing external, not even one's own body.

The Jhanas are a refined and precise manner with strict requirements and subtle principles. One must have strong interest and commitment for that level of practice. For now, just be consistently interested in the basic steps until they become familiar and ordinary, then you might be able gather in the higher levels later.

Meditation is not for everyone. How to start meditating is a question many people ask and one I hope that this article answers. May we all give ourselves the chance to satisfy the basic needs of our practice before going on to more difficult things. May you train with these first steps in order to be fully equipped with Sila (morality), Samadhi (concentration), and Panna (wisdom), to be fully grounded in the noble eightfold path.

Even if only a start, this is better than not going anywhere. Your body will become more healthy and peaceful than usual by training in successively higher levels of Samadhi. You will discover something that everyone should find in order to not waste the opportunity of having been born.