

Mindful Breathing Meditation

** To listen to this exercise, visit <http://takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/meditation> and click on Meditation Exercise on the left.*

We can decide to set aside some time each day for ourselves. A time when we can comfortably still the body. Setting aside activity and constant doing. Allowing ourselves to do non-doing. Just to simply be.

Allow the body to become still. Sit in a chair; back straight, posture relaxed. Awake and dignified. Settle into this moment. Feel the body. The support of the floor; the chair. Settle into this seat.

Become aware that you are breathing. Become aware of the movement of the breath.

Feel the breath coming in and breath leaving; flowing in and flowing out. Not controlling the breath; just aware of how the breath feels.

Allow yourself to be with this flow of breath. In and out. You may notice this breath in your nostrils as the breath enters your nose. You may notice this breath at the chest as the lungs fill with air as you breathe in and deflate as you breathe out. Perhaps you may feel the breath at the belly as the belly rises and fills on the in-breath and flattens and sinks on the out-breath.

Allow your attention to ride on the sensations of each breath. Not thinking about breathing, but feeling the breath. Allow the breath to breathe itself. Give full care and attention to each breath. Observe the full cycle of each breath. Locate the very beginning of the in-breath and following it as it enters the nose and fills the lungs and belly. Then, coming to a tiny moment of stillness before it turns around and makes it's journey out of the body.

Let your attention rest on the filling of the breath – the entire cycle of breathing. If your mind wanders off to thoughts or memories or regrets or planning, as soon as you become aware guide it back gently but firmly to this breath. Simply come back to this breath.

And now continue to follow your breath on your own. Say to yourself “in and out” on each breath.