

## **Audio Track Transcripts**

for

*Mindfulness and Meditation in Trauma Treatment:*

*The Inner Resources for Stress Program*

by Lynn C. Waelde

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### **Track 1: Guided Body Tour**

*29 minutes 59 seconds*

Just take a moment to notice your breathing. You don't have to do anything to change your breathing, just see what your breathing is doing.

You can notice where your breath is going and where it's not going. You can follow the breath as it comes in through your nose, past your throat, expands in the heart area, and expands in the navel, and then follow the breath as it goes out again, past your navel, your heart, your throat and out of your nose again.

Now turn your attention to your right foot, notice how your foot is feeling, the sole of the foot, the top of the foot. You can direct your breath and your attention to your foot by just breathing in through the nose and then through the throat; the breath travels all down the body, down your leg, right to your right foot. And as you exhale, follow the breath as it goes out again, past your leg, your trunk, out past your navel, your heart, your throat, and out your nose.

You can take a moment just to bathe your foot in your breath and your attention. Now shift your attention to your right ankle and calf. See how your ankle, calf, and your shin are feeling. You can take a breath right into your right calf and as you exhale, watch the breath leave again. Inhaling through the nose, past the throat in the heart and the navel, and the breath travels all the way down the right leg to your right calf. As you exhale, let go of your right calf and move your attention to your right knee. Direct your breath there by just following your breath as it comes in

through your nose all the way down your body and really just bathes your right knee; and as you exhale watch the breath as it travels out again.

Inhaling right to your right knee and as you exhale, just let go of your knee and shift your attention to your right thigh. Direct your breath to your thigh, notice how your thigh is feeling and watch the breath as it goes out again.

Now turn your attention to your left foot, notice how your left foot is feeling, you can direct your breath to your left foot. You can really breathe into it through your nose, past your throat, way down your body, down your leg, and just fill up the left foot with your breath and as you exhale watch the breath as it goes out again.

Inhaling into your left foot and exhaling and release the foot. Breathe into your left ankle and calf, just notice how it's feeling, the ankle, calf, and the shin, and direct your breathing there. Breathing right into the left calf and as you exhale, watching the breath go out again.

And now exhaling the left calf and turning your attention to your left knee. Bringing your breath and attention to your left knee, letting your attention rest there filling the knee with your breath, and on exhalation letting go of the left knee and shifting your attention to your left thigh. Just hold your attention there while you direct your breath to your entire thigh: the top, the bottom, the outside the inside, just watching the breath as it comes in through your nose and all the way down into your left thigh and then watching the breath as it goes out again.

And now you can turn your attention to your right hand. Just notice how your hand is feeling. You can breathe in through your nose, past your throat and into your heart, and all the way down your arm right to your right hand, filling up the whole of your hand with your breath: the palm of the hand, the back, the fingers, and then watching the breath go back up your arm and out your nose again.

And then exhaling and letting go of your hand and turn your attention to your right forearm. Just rest your attention there. Notice everything about it, breathing into your right forearm with a full breath and then exhaling and watching the breath go out again.

Exhaling the right forearm and inhaling to your right elbow: just filling up the elbow with your breath, holding your attention there and as you're ready, you can exhale the right elbow and inhale to your right upper arm, filling the upper arm with your breath. As you exhale, watching the breath flow out again.

Then inhaling to your right shoulder. Just visualize the breath coming in through your nose, past your throat, your heart, right over to your shoulder. And exhaling and letting go of your right shoulder and turning your attention to your left hand, direct the breath all the way down to your left hand notice everything about it: how your palm feels, the back of your hand, your fingers, and just watching the breath flowing right down your arm and filling up your hand.

And now moving your attention to your left forearm: breathing into the left forearm, filling it with your breath and then watching the breath as it goes out again.

And now turning your attention to your left elbow, direct your breath right to your left elbow, and as you exhale, watch the breath go out again.

And then exhaling your left elbow and moving your attention to your left upper arm, following the breath as it travels there, noticing everything about how that feels. You can watch the breath as it goes out again.

And now moving your attention to your left shoulder, breathing right into that left shoulder holding your attention there and then watching as the breath goes out again.

And now turn your attention to your hips and the base of your spine. Just notice how that area feels and direct the breath there, filling up the whole of your hips, your tail bone, your sit bones, and then watching the breath as it goes, as it turns around and then goes out again. You can watch the breath as it comes in through your nose and past your throat and fills up your heart area and your navel then goes all the way to your sit bones, your hips, and the base of your spine and that's where the breath turns around again and goes out past your navel, your heart, out your throat, and all the way out your nose.

Now you can raise your attention up to your belly to your whole navel area. Watch the breath as it comes in through your nose and travels all the way down to your belly. You might notice that your belly is gently rising and falling with each breath. You can relax in the belly, invite the breath there and hold your attention there, and on the exhalation, releasing your navel. This time breathing into the top of your body, you can concentrate right on the center of your chest, right in your heart area, feeling the breath fill up and expand there. Noticing everything about how that feels, in your chest and on your upper back as you direct the breath there and hold your attention there for a moment, filling the whole heart area up with breath and then simply watching the breath as it goes out again.

And then you can release your attention to your throat and your neck. Just take a moment to see how your throat and your neck feel. You can direct your breath right in to fill up your whole throat and your neck and the tops of your shoulders. Just hold your attention there and then watch the breath as it goes out again. You might want to swallow in the throat as you inhale, relax in that area and then watch the breath as it goes out again.

And then you can turn your attention to the lower half of your face and head. Notice how you feel there: your jaw, lips, teeth, and your tongue and just direct your breath there to the bottom part of your head and holding your attention and watching the breath as it goes out again.

And then you can move your attention to the upper half of your face and all the way around to the middle part of your scalp, noticing the feeling when the breath comes in your nose. The breath may seem a little cooler as it comes in and a little warmer as it goes out of your nose. Notice how your eyes feel, the whole area around your eyes: your eyebrows, your ears, and just above your ears, around the back of your head. Direct the breath there and hold your attention there for just a moment. Now you can move your attention to your forehead, and your temples and around the back of your head. Take a moment to direct your breath there, and as you exhale, let go of your forehead and shift your attention to the top of your head, notice how the top of your head feels, Direct your breath there. The whole top of your head, the scalp, all the muscles under your scalp just notice how they feel as you direct your breath and your attention there. Now just let go of your breathing just for a moment and simply watch where your breath is going. You don't have to do anything to your breathing and there's really no right way or wrong way to do it, just simply watching what is.

You may wish to direct your breath to your whole body now as you breathe in through the nose and past the throat into the heart and the navel and then just fill up your entire body with the breath and expanding and as you exhale, just letting go and letting the breath flow out again. Take a moment to notice if there is a relaxed place on the inside really focus your attention there, expand that area, filling that area with your breath.

As you draw your meditation practice to a close, you can just take that relaxed feeling with you even after you've finished your practice; it's always as close as your next breath.

## **Track 2: Complete Breath**

*29 minutes 38 seconds*

Just take a moment to notice your breathing.

You can just relax your mind into the inflow and outflow of your breath.

Watching the breath as it comes in through your nose, past your throat, and seeing where it goes after that, on each inhalation; and then watching the breath as it goes out again.

Watch every part of your breathing. Notice how the breath feels as it comes in through your nose.

Notice how the breath feels in your throat. You can even swallow in the throat.

You can watch the breath as it goes all the way down to your heart area. You may feel that your chest is rising and falling with each breath.

You can watch the breath as it goes all the way down to your navel. Relax in the navel and see if the breath goes all the way there and notice what happens as you inhale and as you exhale.

Just watch every part of your breath.

Notice if your breath makes a sound when you inhale and exhale.

There's really no right way or wrong way to do it. It's really just a matter of watching the breath. Thoughts may come and thoughts may go, but you don't have to focus on them. Just return your attention to your breath. They're a little like clouds floating through the sky. They'll come up and they'll blow away again without you doing anything about it at all. You're not pulling the clouds towards you and you're not pushing them away either, and so it is with our thoughts and our feelings. They will naturally come up and you can just let go of them again. And just return your attention to your breath. Notice if your breath is any different now than when you first started.

And if you want to link your attention to your breath even more you can just count all the parts of your breath. You can count 1 as you inhale through the nose, through the throat, and to the top of your chest. Inhale 2 to your heart and the middle part of your body. And on 3 inhaling right down to your belly. And then exhaling on 1 and release the belly and on 2 exhaling past the heart. On 3 you're exhaling past your throat and your nose. So you can inhale on 1, on 2, on 3, and then exhale on 1, on 2, and 3.

It's as though you're filling up two balloons. And as you inhale on 1 filling up the top of the balloons. And on 2 the middle part. And on 3 filling up the two balloons completely. And

then exhaling on 1 and the bottom part of the balloon exhales and on 2 the middle part and on 3 all the air goes out. Past the neck and on out of the balloon. You can just visualize filling up your two lungs just like two balloons counting each part, just in harmony with your own breathing. You can count to yourself as your breath and that will further link your attention to your breath.

If your mind should wander away, just gently bring it back to counting each part of the three-part breath. Inhaling on 1, and 2, and 3, and exhaling on 1, and 2, and 3.

And now you can begin to deepen your breath a little bit. You don't need to breathe any faster, but just freshen your breath a little bit by inhaling just a little more fully on 1 and 2 and 3 and exhaling completely.

And now you may want to deepen your breath even a little bit more by inhaling completely on 1 and 2 and 3 really expanding and filling up your lungs as much as they can be filled. And then as you exhale on 1 and 2 and 3, really push all of that old air out. On 1 the belly is collapsing pressing more towards your spine, on 2 the diaphragm is falling towards your spine and going up a little bit, on 3 all the old air going out. Past your collar bones, past your throat, past your jaw and out through your nose again. So you're breathing completely. You may be breathing more slowly by now. But just filling up both lungs and expanding as much as you can.

And as you exhale, just exhaling completely. Letting go of all the old air, making room for new air to come in on the inhalation.

You can if you wish pause for a moment after a complete inhalation. Really expand and just hold the breath for just a moment, not straining; but just holding a full, expanded breath for just a moment before you exhale again.

And the same on the exhalation. After you completely exhale on 3, you can just hold that for a moment, not straining, but just for a brief moment pause after that complete exhalation before you inhale again.

And now you can just let the breath go for a moment. See how your breath is different now than when you first started.

Just watch your breath, see where it's going, and where it isn't going.

Just watch every part of the inhalation and exhalation without doing anything to change your breathing.

And you might picture on the inhalation that you're inhaling bright, pure light. So it's coming in through the nose, past your throat, your heart, and your navel.

Inhaling the light through your nose and past your throat, and really expand in the heart. Just feel that that light is filling up the part 1 of your breath, and as you exhale, that breath and that light is just flowing throughout the whole top of your body. Your head, your neck, your collar bones, your shoulders, and right down your arms. Inhaling the light and exhaling it and it just flows right through your body.

And now breathing the light down to the second part of your complete breath. Breathing it in right to your heart, the middle part of your chest, filling that area completely with this infinite supply of light and energy. And on the exhalation, just watch the light just travel throughout the whole top half of your body, through your arms.

And now bringing the breath all the way down to the navel; the breath and the light filling up the entire trunk. Filling up your whole belly and on the exhalation that light just travels throughout your whole body; down your legs to your feet, and your toes. Down your arms to your elbows, your fingers to your fingertips, bathing your neck, your throat, your head.

And there's no limit to this light and energy. You can keep bringing more and more in, just to refresh you. Bringing in that fresh air and light, filling up the whole of your body with it. And as you exhale just letting go, letting all the old air go, exhaling completely.

And you may still wish to count the breath if you want. Inhaling on 1 and 2 and 3, filling up with light and exhaling on 1 and 2 and 3, and the light just filling up your entire body.

And if your mind should happen to wander away, just gently bring it back to your breath and to the visualization.

Just watching every part of your breath. Just resting your mind and your breath and fully immersing your attention in it. If your mind should happen to wander away just gently bring it back to your breath. There's nothing in particular you need to be doing right now just simply being and watching.

And now you can let the breath and the visualization go and just simply watch the flow of your experience. Just taking a moment to notice any feeling of relaxation and peacefulness that you found on the inside. Just rest your attention there while you notice the flow of your experience.

And as you draw your meditation to a close just take with you any sensation of relaxation that you've experienced. Whenever you need to you can just breathe in and find it inside.

### **Track 3: Hum Sah: Hearing the Sound and Watching the Still Points**

*29 minutes 48 seconds*

Begin by paying attention to your breathing. Notice as much as you can about your breathing. Watching the air as it comes in through your nose, past your throat, and into your heart area, and all the way down to your belly. And just watch every part of your breath as you exhale.

You don't have to do anything to change your breathing, just watch it. You might even notice that your breath makes a natural sound as you inhale and exhale. Just take a moment to notice the sound or the flow of your breathing.

You might notice that the breath sounds like *Hum* on the inhalation and *Sah* on the exhalation. It is just the natural sound of your breath.

Hum Sah. The breath makes the sound of Hum on the inhalation and it makes the sound of Sah on the exhalation. So, you can just take a moment to listen for that sound as you inhale and exhale.

You can also repeat Hum Sah with each breath. You can repeat silently to yourself "Hum" on the inhalation and "Sah" with every exhalation.

Hum Sah. Just repeat with every breath, if you want to deepen your focus on your breathing.

Hum on the inhalation and Sah on the exhalation.

You can watch your breath as it comes in through your nose, past your throat, your heart, your navel, all the way down to your tailbone, at the base of your spine. And there Hum turns around and becomes Sah as you exhale. And the breath travels up the back of your spine all the way to your nose again.

Hum inhaling down the front all the way to the base of your spine, and there the breath turns and becomes Sah on the exhale and travels up again and back to your nose.

Hum Sah.

And as you inhale, you may notice that your chest expands, even your belly may expand, but that when the breath reaches your tailbone there is this pause before the breath turns around and becomes Sah. There is that still point when your breath pauses for just a moment before the breath turns from Hum into Sah. Just take a moment to watch that still point after you inhale on Hum but before you exhale on Sah.

Rest your attention in that still point. You may feel a sense of expansion in that moment of stillness.

Really immerse your attention in that still point, that pause in the breath between Hum and Sah. In that one moment where your breath naturally on its own becomes an exhalation, you may feel a lot of expansion or stillness.

You can also watch the point after the exhalation, on Sah, but before the inhalation on Hum. There is another still point there. After you've exhaled, but before the breath turns around and becomes an inhalation again. Take a moment to notice that still point between Sah and Hum.

You don't need to change your breathing or hold your breath. Simply watch that still point after the exhalation and look for the sense of expansion there, and that stillness. Where Sah turns into Hum on the inhalation.

And if something should come up in your meditation, some distraction, you can gently bring your mind back to Hum Sah. You can also direct your attention to that point of holding or tension. Breathe right into that point and expand there, expand larger than the tension or holding. As though you are filling up a large bubble with your breath and inside the bubble all that tension simply breaks up and it washes away as you exhale on Sah.

If your mind is bothering you during the meditation, you can take that breath right into the mind. Inhale there and expand larger than the feeling of tension. Inside the expansion, everything becomes quiet, and the tension simply dissolves and flows out with your next breath. And then return to Hum Sah.

Every time you return your attention to repeating Hum Sah, you'll be strengthening your practice that much more. Thoughts may continue during the practice, but you can just rest your attention in repeating Hum on the inhalation and Sah as you exhale. Immerse your attention in those still points where the breath pauses for a moment.

Just keep letting go. Letting go of anything that comes up, any experiences, any thoughts, any feelings... just keep letting it go. And watching to see what comes next.

Breathing right into any points of tension or holding, expanding there, and then surrendering those tensions... simply letting them flow out as you exhale.

Hum Sah is the natural mantra. It just repeats itself all the time... with every breath. You can begin to just look for the sound. It will seem to come up all on its own. Hum Sah. Just repeating, again and again, with every breath that you take.

Listen for the sound of Hum Sah with every inhalation and exhalation. And as you draw your meditation practice to a close, you can just continue to watch for Hum Sah or repeat Hum Sah as often as you can with each breath. Hum on the inhalation and Sah with every exhalation.

#### **Track 4: Tension Release and Self-Guided Meditation**

*29 minutes 48 seconds*

Take a comfortable position. You can sit relatively straight with your feet flat on the floor and your hands on your knees or in your lap. Just check to see if your shoulders are aligned with your hips.

Notice each breath as you inhale. You can watch the breath as it comes in through your nose and goes past your throat and then watch where the breath goes after that. You may notice that your chest or your stomach expands when you breathe. Then notice how it feels as you exhale.

You can notice everything there is to notice about your breathing. Notice how the breath sounds, notice the temperature of your breathing.

If your thoughts should happen to wander away that's a perfectly natural thing, you can just gently bring your thoughts back, not in a forceful way, but just in a gentle way, just return your attention back to breath because there's really nothing else that you need to be doing right now, just simply sitting and noticing.

If it's comfortable, you can notice your breath as you inhale, expanding right in the center of your chest. If that's uncomfortable for you, then you can just watch the whole length of your breath.

Watching as your chest expands on the inhalation and then watching as your chest goes down with each exhalation.

Now we can do something called the Tension Release exercise. For Tension Release, you can just put your hands out by your sides with palms facing the floor, so your fingertips are actually pointing toward the floor, but palms facing inside. Just let them hang comfortably. If you're sitting in a chair with armrests, you can put your arms on the outside of the armrests, with your hands facing toward your body. Let your fingers drop naturally toward the floor. On the next inhalation, you can inhale right into the center of your chest and really just expand there and

visualize or imagine that there is a bubble or balloon that's really expanding on the inhalation. As it expands, all the tension or holding is just dissolving and as you exhale you can imagine that the tension is going right through your shoulders right down the center of your arms and out the palms of your hands.

If it is comfortable, inhale right into the center of your chest and expand there, watching any tension or holding dissolve and as you exhale, the heart is acting like a pump, and all the dissolved tension or holding flows out, down your arms and right out the palms of your hands.

It's just a way of imagining that first as you inhale you're blowing up a balloon or bubble and inside the balloon or bubble anything that has happened or didn't happen, any tensions or holding, they just dissolve there and you can repeat to yourself "I wish to release all negative tension" and as you exhale your heart is just like a pump and it's pumping out any negative tension or holding from your heart right down your shoulders, right down your arms, and through the palms of your hand and it's just falling away through the floor.

"I wish to release all negative tension."

So once again, exhaling and when you inhale you can inhale as big as is comfortable for you, really imagining that you're expanding and any tension or holding really just dissolving there and as you exhale, it just flows right out and you can say to yourself "I wish to release all negative tension."

The wish to release that negative tension is the most important part of the exercise. It is just wishing to release all that negative tension, anything that has happened or has not happened, just taking a big breath there and as you exhale just watch it flow out.

You can say to yourself "I wish to release all negative tension." So just try that on your own, at your own pace, for the next minute or two.

Now you can raise your arms overhead with your arms in the sharp of a "V", with the two palms facing each other. You can just draw in a big refreshing breath, through both of your hands, straight down into your heart area, and expand there; and as you hold your breath for a few moments, you can repeat, "I wish to release all negative tensions." And as you exhale, slowly lower your arms to the floor again, palms facing the floor and let all the tensions flow out with your breath.

You can just continue with Tension Release practice in harmony with your own breath for a few more minutes.

As you're doing the Tension Release exercise you can swallow in the throat as you inhale. Just take a moment to inhale, swallowing in the throat and then really expand as you inhale. "I consciously wish to release all negative tension," as you exhale just watch as the tension flows out through the two palms of your hands.

Anytime you want, you can let go of the practice and just watch your breathing. You can just repeat that Tension Release exercise at your own pace.

It's nice to practice the Tension Release exercise sometimes in the morning before you start your day, just taking that big refreshing breath and letting go of any tension to start your day clear. It's also nice to Tension Release at the end of the day where you feel like you may have accumulated a lot of thoughts and feelings and plans during the day, and you can just erase all that so that you can go to sleep at night with a clear mind, clear and peaceful, just letting go of the day's tensions. Some people like to do Tension Release at the beginning of sitting practice or sometimes at the end, to just let go of anything that has happened or didn't happen. Tension Release is an exercise that you can do many different times during the day. You can also practice it during your sitting practice so that you get really familiar with how it works for you.

Now as you bring your practice to the close, you can return your hands to your lap.

[Self-guided meditation periods can simply be observed in silence or with a brief introduction, such as the following.]

For the rest of this period of practice, you can work with the practices at your own pace, using any of the techniques we have practiced so far.

And as you bring your practice to a close, you can continue to pay attention to your breath and bring that practice into your daily life.

## **Bonus Tracks**

### **Bonus Track 1: 1.5-Minute Breath-Focused Meditation—Easy!**

*1 minute 30 seconds*

Now get ready to meditate.

You can close your eyes if you wish. Just take a moment to notice your breathing. Watch the breath as it comes in through your nose, past your throat, and see where your breath goes after that on the inhalation, then watch the breath as it goes out again on the exhalation. Watch

every part of your breathing. Notice how your breath feels as it comes in through your nose. Notice how the breath feels in your throat. You may feel that your chest is rising and falling with each breath. See if your breath goes all the way down to your belly and just notice what happens as you inhale and exhale. Just watch every part of your breath. There's really no right way or wrong way to do it, it's just a matter of watching your breathing. Thoughts may come and thoughts may go but you don't have to focus on them, just return your attention to your breath. Thoughts and feelings will naturally come up and you can just let go of them again and return your attention to your breath. Just watch your breath and see where it's going and where it isn't going. Notice every part of the inhalation and exhalation without doing anything to change your breathing. If your mind should happen to wander away, gently bring it back to your breathing. Now you can take this exercise with you as you go on about your day.

## **Bonus Track 2: Body–Breath Awareness**

*4 minutes 44 seconds*

Now just take a moment to take a comfortable position. You can sit relatively straight in a chair with your hips toward the back of the seat. Just keep your feet flat on the floor right under your knees and then see if your shoulders are just about over your hips. You can tilt your head forward just a little bit, dropping the chin, and then tilt your head back a little bit and then find that balance point right in the middle. You can tilt your head to the right and then you can tilt your head to the left and then find then find that balance point right in the middle. You can relax your hands in your lap and just take a moment to notice how it feels to sit.

You can notice your feet on the floor, how your feet feel, the temperature of your feet. You can notice how it feels to sit in the chair, how your legs feel in the chair, and how your back feels.

Now, notice the front of your body, the belly, the chest. You can notice how your hands feel, your arms, and the body as you sit. Note your neck and your head.

Now, watch as your breath comes in through your nose and past your throat and then watch to see where your breath goes after that.

And then you can watch your breath as you exhale, noticing everything about your breath: how it feels, the temperature of your breath, you can notice if your breath is making any sound.

And again, watching your breath as you inhale. Watching your breath come in through your nose and past your throat and then notice where your breath goes after that. Does it expand in the chest, does it go all the way down to your belly?

You can watch your breath as you exhale.

There's no right way or wrong way to do it, it's just simply a matter of watching your breathing.

And, then watch your breath as you inhale and as you exhale.

You don't have to do anything to change your breathing, just notice your breathing.

Thoughts may come and thoughts may go and that's quite alright, it's just a normal part of the process. Just noticing how it feels to sit right now and just to breathe.

And, you can take that breath awareness with you as you go on about your day.

### **Bonus Track 3: Breath Awareness and Letting Go**

*14 minutes 55 seconds*

Now just take a moment to take a comfortable position. You can shift your hips to the back of the chair and just put your feet right below your knees. You can roll your shoulders back and let your head float very comfortably over your shoulders. You can put your hands in your lap and just take a moment to notice your breathing.

Watch your breath as it comes in through your nose and past your throat and then notice where your breath goes after that. Notice where you expand on the inhalation and notice how it feels to exhale.

Just watching every part of your breath. It's a three-step process: inhale, exhale, repeat. So it's just those three simple things. Knowing that there's no right way or wrong way to do it, it's just a matter of sitting and noticing your breath.

You might notice the temperature of your breath when you inhale and the temperature when you exhale.

And if your mind should happen to wander away, just gently bring it back to your breathing.

If you find that you're getting a little sleepy you can just tilt your chin up a little bit.

Thoughts many come and thoughts may go. It's a little bit like clouds blowing by in the sky. Clouds blow by in the sky and then they blow past you and there's nothing that you really

need to do about it. You don't pull the clouds toward you and you don't push them away. It's just like that with our thoughts and feelings while we're meditating. You don't have to try to push the thoughts away, but you don't have to hold onto them either. You can just sit quietly and watch them as they come up and then watch them as they go again. So, just take a moment to watch your breathing and watch the flow of your attention.

You may find that there is some point of tension or holding. It may be a thought that doesn't go away so easily or a feeling or even a sensation that comes up. If you're feeling any tension or any holding you can try the Letting Go exercise. Even if you're not feeling any tension, you can also follow along.

Just take a breath right into that point of tension or holding or right into the center of your chest. As you inhale, really expand there. You can imagine that you're blowing up a balloon or a bubble and you're blowing it up in every direction and really expanding beyond any sense of tension or holding and as you do that, all the tension or holding just dissolves, and as you exhale just let it go.

Taking a deep refreshing breath, just as big a breath as you are comfortable with. If you can't take a big breath that's okay, just have a real sense of expansion as you inhale and imagine that you're blowing up that bubble or balloon bigger than any tension or holding, in fact even bigger than your body, and on the inside that tension or holding is simply dissolving and as you exhale, just let go.

Some people like to imagine that as they let the breath go it just goes right out the top of their head. You can try that for a couple of minutes just at your own pace. Try taking that refreshing breath into any point of tension or holding, and then expanding larger, and as you do so, any tension or holding, thoughts that keep coming back or strong emotions, just dissolve, and as you exhale, simply let go of them.

And when you're ready, you can just go back to watching your breath, watching the breath come in and watching it as it goes out again as you exhale.

Knowing that whenever you need to, you can just take that refreshing breath in, really expanding past any sense of tension or holding, and you can watch that tension or holding dissolve, and as you exhale simply let go.

You can try Letting Go whenever you need to. We'll take a few more minutes just to watch your breath, returning your focus to your breath whenever it should happen to wander away.

And now you can let go of the breath and let go of the focus on any specific sensation, thought, or feeling and allow yourself to be aware of your present moment experience.

The Letting Go practice is practice you can do at any time. When you're sitting and watching your breath, you can use the Letting Go practice any time you need to. Just taking a breath and expanding, letting any tension or holding dissolve and when you exhale just let go.

And, if your mind should wander, you can bring it back to the breath. As you feel settled in your practice, you can let go of the breath and allow yourself to be aware of your present moment experience.

And, as you draw this practice to a close, just take that breath awareness and spirit of letting go with you.

#### **Bonus Track 4: Breath Awareness and Tension Release**

*14 minutes 49 seconds*

Take a comfortable position. You can sit relatively straight with your feet flat on the floor and your hands on your knees or in your lap. Just check to see if your shoulders are aligned with your hips.

Notice each breath as you inhale. You can watch the breath as it comes in through your nose and goes past your throat and then watch where the breath goes after that. You may notice that your chest or your belly expands when you breathe. Then notice how it feels as you exhale.

You can notice everything there is to notice about your breathing. Notice how the breath sounds, notice the temperature of your breathing.

If your thoughts should happen to wander away that's a perfectly natural thing, you can just gently bring your thoughts back, not in a forceful way, but just in a gentle way, just return your attention back to breath. There's really nothing else that you need to be doing right now, just simply sitting and noticing.

If it's comfortable, you can just notice your breath as you inhale, expanding right in the center of your chest. If that's uncomfortable for you, then you can just watch the whole length of your breath on the inhalation and exhalation.

Watching your breath expand on the inhalation and then watching as your breath goes out with each exhalation.

Now we can do something called the Tension Release exercise. For Tension Release, you can just put your hands out by the side of your chair with palms facing the floor, so your fingertips are pointing toward the floor, but palms facing inside. Just let them hang very comfortably. If you're sitting in a chair with armrests, you can put your arms on the outside of the armrests, with your hands facing toward your body. Let your fingers drop very naturally toward the floor. On the next inhalation you can inhale right into the center of your chest and really expand there and visualize or imagine that there is a balloon or a bubble that's really expanding on the inhalation. As it expands, all the tension or holding is just dissolving and as you exhale you can imagine that the breath is going right through your shoulders and right down the center of your arms and out the palms of your hands.

Just try that a few times at your own pace.

If it is comfortable, inhale right into the center of your chest and expand there, watching any tension or holding dissolve and as you exhale, the heart is acting like a pump, and all the dissolved tension or holding flows out, down your arms and right out the palms of your hands.

It's just a way of imagining that first as you inhale you're blowing up a bubble or balloon and inside the bubble or balloon anything that has happened or didn't happen, any tensions or holding, they just dissolve there and you can repeat to yourself, "I wish to release all negative tension" and as you exhale your heart is just like a pump and it's pumping out any negative tension or holding from your heart right down your shoulders, right down your arms, and through the palms of your hand and it's just falling away through the floor.

"I wish to release all negative tension."

And, so once again, exhaling and when you inhale you can inhale as big as is comfortable for you, really imagining that you're expanding and any tension or holding really just dissolving there and as you exhale, it flows right out and you can say to yourself, "I wish to release all negative tension."

The wish to release that negative tension is the most important part of the exercise. It is just wishing to release all that negative tension, anything that has happened or has not happened, just taking a big breath there and as you exhale watch it flow out.

You can say to yourself, “I wish to release all negative tension.” So just try that at your own pace, for the next minute or two.

As you’re doing the Tension Release exercise you can swallow in the throat as you inhale. Just take a moment to inhale, then swallow in the throat and then really expand as you inhale. “I consciously wish to release all negative tension,” and as you exhale just watch as the tension flows out through the two palms of your hands.

Anytime you want, you can let go of the practice and just watch your breathing. You can repeat the Tension Release exercise at your own pace.

It’s nice to practice the Tension Release exercise sometimes in the morning before you start your day, just taking that big refreshing breath and letting go of any tension to start your day clear. It’s also nice to Tension Release at the end of the day when you feel like you may have accumulated a lot of thoughts and feelings and plans during the day, and you can just erase all that so that you can go to sleep at night with a very clear mind, clear and peaceful, just letting go of the day’s tensions. Some people like to do Tension Release at the beginning of sitting practice or sometimes at the very end, to just let go of anything that has happened or didn’t happen. Tension Release is an exercise that you can do many different times during the day. You can also practice it during your sitting practice so that you get really familiar with how it works for you.

Now as you bring your practice to the close, you can shake out your hands, you can gently rock your head from side to side, really shake your arms and shoulders out. You can inhale and squeeze your shoulders up to your ears if that’s comfortable and then as you exhale you can drop your shoulders. Just shaking out any tensions or holding. You can take a refreshing breath and shake off any tension and bring the practice to a close, knowing that you can take any sense of calm and peacefulness and breath focus with you as you go on about the rest of your day.

### **Bonus Track 5: Hum Sah**

*9 minutes 55 seconds*

Begin by paying attention to your breathing. Notice as much as you can about your breathing. Watching the air as it comes in through your nose, past your throat, and into your chest or heart area, and then watch to see where the breath goes after that. You can watch every part of your breath as you exhale.

You don't have to do anything to change your breathing, just watch it. You might even notice that your breath makes a natural sound as you inhale and exhale. Just take a moment to notice the sound or the flow of your breathing.

You might notice that the breath sounds like *Hum* on the inhalation and *Sah* on the exhalation. It is just the natural sound of your breath.

Hum Sah. The breath makes the sound of Hum on the inhalation and it makes the sound of Sah on the exhalation. So, just take a moment to listen for that sound as you inhale and exhale.

You can also silently repeat Hum Sah with each breath. You can repeat "Hum" on the inhalation and "Sah" with every exhalation.

Hum Sah. Just repeat with every breath, if you want to deepen your focus on your breathing.

Hum on the inhalation and Sah on the exhalation.

Hum Sah.

And if something should come up in your meditation, some distraction, you can gently bring your mind back to Hum Sah. You can also use the Letting Go practice to direct your attention to that point of holding or tension. Breathe right into that point and expand there, expand larger than the tension or holding. As though you are filling up a large bubble with your breath and inside the bubble all tension simply breaks up and washes away as you exhale on Sah.

If your mind is bothering you during the meditation, you can take that breath right into the mind. Inhale there and expand larger than the feeling of tension. Inside the expansion, everything becomes very quiet, and the tension simply dissolves and flows out with your next breath. And then return to Hum Sah.

Every time you return your attention to repeating Hum Sah, you'll be strengthening your practice and attention that much more.

Hum Sah. Just repeating Hum on the inhalation and Sah as you exhale. Immerse your attention in these still points where the breath pauses for a moment between Hum and Sah.

Just keep letting go. Letting go of anything that comes up, any experiences, any thoughts, any feelings... just keep letting it go. And watching to see what comes next.

Breathing right into any points of tension or holding, expanding there, and then surrendering those tensions... simply letting them flow out as you exhale.

You can repeat the sounds of Hum Sah with every inhalation and exhalation.

And as you bring your meditation practice to a close, you can continue to watch for Hum Sah or repeat Hum Sah as often as you can with each breath. Hum on the inhalation and Sah with every exhalation. You can repeat this to yourself just as you go about your daily activities. Hum Sah.