

Audio Track 11: Awareness of Breath

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Try this: Awareness of breath.

Let's begin by finding a comfortable position that also enables you to stay alert. Often it's easiest to practice while sitting with a straight but not rigid back. Or if you're very sleepy, you might find it easier to stand. Or if for some reason you need to lie down, that's another posture that might work for you. The important thing is to find whatever position gives you a sense of relaxation along with alertness.

As you settle into your posture, when you feel ready, you might like to close your eyes if it makes it easier to focus inwardly. Or if you prefer to keep your eyes open, just taking a soft gaze toward the floor.

And as you bring your attention inside the body, see if you might become curious about the sensation of breathing that's already happening in your body. You can start by labeling and noticing, "inhale" when you breathe in. And "exhale" when you're breathing out. Becoming ever more curious about what it feels like to inhale. And what it feels like to exhale.

You can keep your focus on a particular area of the body, such as the edge of the nostrils, the rising and falling of the chest, or the expanding and contracting of the belly. Or, you can focus more broadly on the sensation of the whole body, breathing in and breathing out. You might also

begin to notice how the body is nourished on the inhale. The oxygen flows in with the breath and eventually is distributed throughout the body, nourishing the whole body. And how the body releases what it no longer needs through the exhale, relaxing and releasing. Take some time to feel into that now, if you like.

After a while, you might begin to notice the rhythm of the breath. Like waves in the ocean. The breath flows in, and out. Perhaps even noticing if there's a subtle rocking of the body. As the rib cage expands and contracts. And just resting in the gentle rhythmic flow of the breath. Like waves in the ocean. Nourishment. Rolling in. Relaxation and ease, rolling out. You can stay here as long as you like. And whenever you feel ready, you can let go of the particular focus on the breath and just rest inside your body, noticing any effects of this practice. Seeing if you might accept yourself and your practice just like this, even if only for this moment.

And please remember to thank yourself for showing up, for practicing, for giving yourself what you need right now.

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