

# Assisted Meditation

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Retreat Talks · 2 min read

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A guided meditation. A bell will ring approximately every five minutes and twice after half an hour should you wish to end your meditation then.

So, let us establish the posture. Lift up the spine. Remember the puppet string. Energise but not tense. And everything else relaxed off the central column. And the head poised gently on top. Hands on our laps.

Now let's just spend a few moments relaxing first by a mental volition telling all muscles to relax, then by tensing and releasing them, and finally by deep breathing—whatever you feel is necessary to establish calmness in the body.

Now, let us acknowledge just noting and observing the feeling of the whole body. Sitting, sitting, sitting.

Now let us develop the same qualities of alertness and relaxation in the mind using our breath. Note and observe the sensation caused by the process of breathing at your preferred place. If the mind wanders, just bring it back gently but firmly to the breath. Rising, falling, sitting.

If your mind is wandering, note thinking or dreaming and bring your attention back to the breath, gently but firmly. If you feel sleepy, put more energy into the spine. Sit tall but not tense.

By now we should feel more focused and still, so let's open up the awareness and be attentive to whatever comes into the body, mind and heart. Note and observe carefully any sensations arising at the sense faculties, such as hearing a sound. Note and observe all sensations in the body, cold and heat, itching, stiffness and so on. Note and observe all emotional states as and when they occur. Note and catch all thoughts and images before they lead you astray, and if judging starts up, note it quickly.

Don't be concerned to see the three characteristics of existence, transience, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality. The intuitive intelligence, *satipaññā*, once unlocked from the body, mind and heart, will see these three signs naturally. If any thought about them occurs, note thinking-thinking. Thought doesn't have the power to make spiritual insight.

So let's just note and observe each physical, mental and emotional event as it arises and passes away. No need to think about anything, no need to experience something extraordinary. Just ordinary consciousness and ordinary sensations, thoughts and emotions will do.

Always begin with the breath. And if we get lost, start again right there. Rising, falling, sitting. If your mind is wandering, just bring it back gently but firmly to the process of breathing. If you feel sleepy, sit tall and

raise energy up the spine.

Don't be concerned by how many times we've wandered away and have had to re-establish our attentiveness. This is the practice, this is the training of the mind we must do persistently and patiently, raising interest to see exactly what's happening at the physical, emotional and mental levels. We keep using the noting technique to tether the mind to all events as they arise and pass away. And if we get lost, we always start again with the breath.

Once you feel confident, try to meditate without the tape and lengthen your time to a good hour once in the morning and once in the evening. Don't forget to practice a little loving kindness meditation, *mettā bhāvanā*. And when you end the sitting, come out slowly and gently and take that *satipaññā*, your intuitive awareness with you, into ordinary daily life.

May your practice bear great fruit. May you be liberated of all suffering. May you experience the peace and bliss of Nibbāna.

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