

Mindful Work

Breathing practice – alternative techniques

When starting the breathing practices, try alternative ways to do it – we're all different and you need to find for yourself what works best. Here are some options:

Focusing your attention

The basic practice is about sensation – without analysis or commentary. Find out where in the body you can focus best; at the nostrils, in the throat, the chest, lungs or movement of the belly etc. Be like a scientist, exploring in very fine detail the sensations experienced.

Bursts of attention with pauses

If a minute is too long to hold your attention, try pulses of attention. Focus intently for about 10 seconds, then pause and relax, and again for another 10 seconds etc.

Counting

Count the in-breaths, maybe up to 7, then if that works, 21. Then if you're a show-off, count back down again!

'Mind wandering'

For sure, the mind will wander. The act of noticing this is an achievement in itself. Just label this 'thinking' or 'mind wandering', and come back to the body focus. Do not judge yourself; be gentle.

Focus on in-breath or out-breath

Try bringing particular attention to all the in-breaths for one minute, then change to the out-breaths. Notice the different feeling in the body with the in-breath and out-breath.

Saying 'letting go' and 'breathing in'

If thoughts in the form of words arise, replace them. With the out-breath, you can say to yourself '*letting go*' - of tensions thoughts, worries etc. Don't force it, just use this to relax more and more. If it helps, also say '*breathing in*' on the in-breath.

Visualisation

If scenes or scenarios tend to enter your mind, replace them - the mind can only handle a few things at once so use a positive image. Imagine, for example, that you are sitting beside a lake on in the mountains with a fantastic view before you.