

CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY

Mindfulness of breathing is the contemplation of body that helps to develop concentration.

Preparation — relax your body and mind

Sit in a comfortable position. Keep the back straight. Gently close your eyes and take a deep breath. Breathe in love and breathe out all stress, worries, and irritations. Let them go with the wind.

Next, we must learn to relax the body by doing a body scan — starting from the top of the head and slowly moving down each part of the body, relaxing each part one by one: forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, lips, jaw, neck, shoulders, chest, upper back, abdomen, lower back, arms, hands, thighs, calves, and feet. Again, from head to sole, relax

Mindfulness of Breathing (Anāpānasati)

Anāpānasati takes the in-and-out breath as object. Keep your attention under the nostrils where the breath touches. Do not follow the breath up to the head or down to the abdomen—doing so causes the mind to move and prevents concentration from developing. Also, avoid paying attention to the cold or heat of the breath, which switches the object from the breath to the fire element. Simply be aware of the flow of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils; allow the breath to flow naturally, without trying to control it.



Practice with a relaxed mind, without strain or expectation. Wanting to achieve something creates excessive effort and causes the mind to tense up. Balancing concentration and effort is important. The effort needed here is the effort to be constantly aware, to notice. The breath can be long, short, clear or unclear, just be aware of the breath as it truly is, regardless.

When a thought arises, simply be aware of its arising and then gently “pull” the mind back to the breath. Persistently bringing the mind back to the breath again and again will make mindfulness on the breath continuous. Only when mindfulness is continuous can concentration develop. As concentration deepens, the breath will become more subtle, and light (nimitta) may appear. Light is the product of concentration. However, do not pay attention to the light immediately. If you do, the light may disappear. When the light becomes brighter and persists for 20-30 minutes, the mind may naturally shift its attention to the light, and eventually “sink” into it for a long time, after which you will attain either access or absorption (jhāna) concentration.