

Walking Meditation

This is one of the most accessible practices to keep in your “tool box,” simply because walking has been in our lives from the very first steps we took. But walking meditation takes on a different emphasis than simple walking.

In walking meditation, awareness is brought to the experience of walking. Typically when we walk there is a place or object we are directed towards. This is the challenge of walking meditation; there is no *end goal*/the attention is within the body and mind.

Think about the steps you have already taken today. Were you trying to accomplish something with that movement? Did your mind concentrate on where you were going, or was your mind distracted by something or by thoughts? Walking meditation aims to focus on the sensation of moving. This does not mean we need to look at our feet or try to control our arm movement, but simply noticing how the whole body experiences walking and how it works together to create this movement. Although walking is a learned movement it can be automatic and when the mind is in a hurry or is distracted so is walking.

<http://www.happyinpembrokeshire.com/walking-meditation/>



The practice of walking is the focus in walking meditation. Noticing how each foot feels and the sensation of picking up one foot from the ground and placing it on the floor again. Observing the sensation in the leg and throughout the upper body, no need to look at the feet or try to control what is happening. Keep a gentle gaze and when the mind wanders to thoughts, you gently bring the mind back to walking and try to keep focus inward.

When bringing attention to the inner sensations of walking, it is enough to just be with each step right where you are with no expectation of end result. Attention to walking is actually quite tricky, because of the automatic nature of the movement. It may feel “*silly*” or “*wrong*”. Sensations that come up may have you feeling unbalanced or off center, simply because it’s a new sensation. Be persistent, without questioning sensations you feel, staying in the present moment and exploring self-acceptance.

Walking Meditation – Begin Your Walk

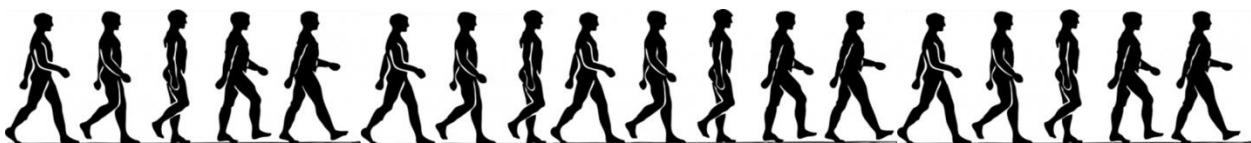
You begin by setting a specific time and place that you can walk with no distractions. Decide on a place you can walk either back and forth or in an oval or circle. This may be in your backyard, in your house or anywhere you can practice unobserved or interrupted. Decide what type of footwear you need to be safe and comfortable. Barefoot? Socks? Sandals? Sneakers?

Set aside five to twenty minutes on a stop watch or on your phone. Five to ten minutes is a good amount to start with to enable an everyday or regular practice. Start with the mind focused on the sensations of walking. One foot in front of the other moves the body. The heel lifts, the toe lifts and the whole foot is now off the ground. Balance throughout the body pulls the movement forward. Start slowly, and focus on *one aspect* of walking.

Determine where you choose to observe the sensation of walking:

- Is it in the heels, the balls of the foot, the toes, or the entire foot
- The ankles, knees or entire leg
- The whole body as it moves through space

Maintain your focus on the aspect you have decided is the strongest for the entire duration of the walk. When you find you have wandering thoughts, with a non-judgmental attitude resume the focus on your chosen aspect of walking. *Practice at any pace, but usually slower than normal helps to maintain the focus.* It takes time and repetition to overcome habitual thoughts and reactions. Continually bring your mind and attention back into the sensations of what your body is feeling.



<http://corefocuswellness.com/blog/walking-to-lose-weight/>

With practice, you can begin to add focus to other parts of the body, the whole body or perhaps even the breath.