

The Basic Mindfulness ‘Formula’

Start with focusing on an ‘anchor’ such as the breath or body. Then shift focus to another aspect of experience, eg sounds, or thoughts. Then expand focus to become simultaneously aware of multiple aspects of experience, e.g. sounds, thoughts, sensations, breathing, and body posture.

1. Find a comfortable position, feet on the floor, back straight, shoulders loose,
2. Close your eyes, or fix them on a non-distracting spot
3. Make it your intention for the next few minutes to purely and simply be present, here and now – and to notice what is happening, with an attitude of openness and curiosity.
4. Bring your awareness to X
5. Simply notice X without judging it, analysing it, fighting it or trying to change it. Observe X with curiosity. Learn as much about X as you can.
6. As you maintain your attention on X, thoughts will come into your awareness. Allow them to come & go freely, as they please. Don't try & hold on to them or push them away. Simply acknowledge their presence, let them be, and bring your attention back to X.
7. From time to time, urges, feelings and sensations will probably arise. When they do, simply acknowledge them, and let them be. Make room for them. Let them stay, or come & go freely, as they please. Don't try & hold on to them or push them away.
8. From time to time your attention will “wander off.” As soon as you realise this has happened, gently acknowledge it, briefly note what distracted you, and bring your attention back to X.
9. There is no need to be disappointed or frustrated. Our attention naturally wanders. Each time you notice your attention has wandered, simply note what distracted you, and gently bring your attention back to X.
10. Remember, you are learning a valuable skill so be gentle with yourself. If your attention wanders 1000 times, your aim is simply to bring it back 1000 times.
11. Now bring your attention to Y (Repeat previous instructions as desired.)
12. Now bring your attention to Z

13. Now notice X and Y and Z, all at the same time.

14. Now notice where you are, what you're doing, and everything you're aware of; then open your eyes and connect with the room around you, and hold onto that sense of being present, here and now.

- Russ Harris.