

Setting the sitting, The Seven Points of Posture

The Centered Path, Part 5 of Buddhist Basics (Ref: Mahasatipatthana Sutta

Thus I have heard.

An anchor to contemplation and mindfulness is sitting in meditation posture. Although there is no one posture that is 'right' for everyone, it is generally agreed that this is the best way to achieve progress in meditation practice. Making your position a constant 'habit' will help you.

You should be stable in your position, like a mountain. Your head is the peak, you can observe the universe from there. Sitting gives you an excellent way to stabilize your mind as you do not usually sit in posture. Your posture should emulate (unattached) confidence and calm. No matter what, comfort is key. You may sit on the bare floor, on a mat, a zafu and zabuton, or a chair. A folded big towel or a small cushion is totally acceptable.

Legs: should be in either Lotus (if you can get in and out of it), Half lotus, Burmese style (Indian style with one leg forward), Zazen (kneeling on ankles),

Back: If you sit in a chair or on the floor, the back should be straight but not rigid. Imagine your vertebrae are all stacked like coins, or that your head is attached by a string to the sky.. Your head will float on the neck.

Shoulders: Should be relaxed and under the line of the ear from the side. You may want to roll your shoulders around a couple times before you start so they are not tense. Shoulders may feel heavy as they relax, and you begin to feel the weight of the arms.

Head: Not too far forward or back, just above the shoulders, the chin slightly tucked and relaxed. Lips should be gently closed, allow your face to soften, the brow to relax.

Eyes: Optionally you can keep your eyes closed, focusing your gaze to the point between the eyebrows (this helps concentration but can also make you more sleepy and dull). If your eyes are open, keep them about $\frac{1}{3}$ open, gently gazing to about where your head will touch the ground if you were to lean forward.

Tongue: The tongue should be relaxed in the mouth, to really keep energy and attention place the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth behind the teeth as if saying the letter 'N'. It can help you if you start to really relax and drool.

Hands: There are multiple hand positions called 'mudras' For basic meditation we can stick to three; The mindfulness mudra, hands palm down on the thighs, the open mind mudra, hands palms up on the thighs, or the meditation mudra, right hand in left palm in the lap with the thumbs gently touching. You can use the mudras as part of your intention when meditation begins. Other mudras can help achieve and maintain mental states, such as the teaching, calming, and

Is it OK to lie down for meditation? You can, but it commonly becomes 'sleeping meditation'. Walking or standing is a perfect posture as well, gentle calmness and comfort are key. Be mindful when you move as in walking or if you need to change position or scratch an itch. Feel free to adapt for any health issues you have, back, knees, hips, etc. Remember comfort is more important than looking good in meditation. 0