

MIDL Walking Meditation Instructions

Combining mindful walking with seated meditation is beneficial for meditation because it helps to settle the mind and increase focus.

Step 1: Mindfulness of Standing.

Begin your meditation by standing at the end of your walking path, such as a hallway, 12-20 small steps long, with your feet side by side and your hands linked in front or behind.

- To bring awareness to your body, silently say: “standing” and mentally feel your body as it stands.

These silent words (labels) are used during meditation to help to direct your attention. When using a label, do so slowly with no rush or hurry to remain relaxed. Mentally tune into experiences in your body, such as its heaviness, the touch of your hands, and your feet pressing against the floor as you stand.

Step 2: Mindful Walking.

Once you feel mindfully aware of your body, you can begin to walk along your walking path. Walking in meditation is done in a slow yet relaxed way while being aware of the general experience of your body as it walks.

- To bring awareness to your body as you walk, silently say: “walking” and mentally feel the movement of your body walking.
- At the end of your track, you stop and silently say: "standing". As you turn around silently say: "turning" until you are ready to begin walking again.

What this looks like so far:

1. "Standing">
2. "Walking" > "walking" > "walking" >
3. "Standing" > "turning" >
4. "Walking" > "walking" > "walking" >

Mindfully walking in this way, will bring awareness into your body and withdraw your mind from the world around you.

Step 3: Mindfully Aware of Each Step.

As you become more aware of walking, you can gradually increase your observations. We will begin by noticing two parts to each step and then increase it to three.

Two parts per step: Begin each step by lifting your foot slightly off the floor, letting it swing, and then placing it on the ground in preparation for the next step.

- As your foot lifts and swings, silently say: “Lifting.”
- As you place your foot down, silently say: “Dropping.”

These two silent words (labels) will direct your awareness to the experience of these two movements. Walk up and down slowly in this way, taking your time with standing and mindfully turning at the end of your path, increasing your noticing to develop mindfulness.

What this looks like so far:

1. "Standing">
2. "Walking" > "walking" > "walking" >
3. "Standing" > "turning" >
4. "Lifting" > "dropping" (right) > "lifting" > "dropping" (left) >

Three parts per step: You can increase awareness of each step by silently saying: “lifting” as your foot lifts, “pushing” as your foot swings, and “dropping” as you lower it. To increase mindfulness, mentally feel the difference between each phase.

What this looks like so far:

1. "Standing">
2. "Walking" > "walking" > "walking" >
3. "Standing" > "turning" >
4. "Lifting" > "dropping" (right) > "lifting" > "dropping" (left) >
5. "Standing" > "turning" >
6. "Lifting" > "pushing" > "dropping" (right) > "lifting" > "pushing" > "dropping" (left) >

When finished walking meditation, mindfully move to your meditation place to sit down for your seated meditation.

When Your Mind Wanders

It is normal for our minds to wander during walking meditation, and learning to accept this as a natural part of meditation is a first step in lowering mental suffering. To aid in returning to mindfulness, you can use a silent label, such as “wandering, wandering,” whenever you notice that your mind has wandered. Purposefully developing an attitude of being happy whenever you notice that your mind has wandered is beneficial.

“There you are, I see you (smile)”.

Enhancing this noticing by relaxing and smiling as you begin to walk mindfully again will teach your mind that there is a positive reward in being mindful and letting go of distraction.