

# MIDL Online Buddhist Insight Meditation Course

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## Meditation Skill 01: Physical Restlessness → Body Relaxation.

<https://midlmeditation.com/meditation-skill-01>

### Detailed instructions Skill 01.

- [YouTube: Video Instructions](#)

Intentionally relaxing and tuning into how nice it feels will train your mind to let go of the world around you and rest deeply within your body. Gentle diaphragmatic (belly) breathing is a natural doorway to developing deep physical and mental relaxation that will lower your experience of stress and increase your body awareness throughout the day.

**Tip 1:** *For insight (understanding), be curious about how feelings of physical restlessness are related to stress and how fighting against it will only make you more restless. Also, explore slow, diaphragmatic breaths in your belly and how, if you relax and let go of all resistance with each out breath, they transform the feeling of restlessness into an experience of being physically relaxed and comfortable.*

**Tip 2:** *In Steps 1-5, you will gradually introduce four progressive meditation objects:*

- *Gratitude → flow of sound → touch of clothing → air on skin → relaxation of your body.*

*As insight meditators, we learn that the human mind can be aware of multiple experiences within a single field of awareness. As you introduce each of the above experiences, continue to be mindful of the experiences before it, being grateful for each. This is like carefully adding a weave to a tapestry or colouring in a canvas to form one picture of the experience. This will increase your mindfulness, clarity, and calm thinking about the past and future by helping your mind be present, here and now.*

### Step 1: Preparation.

*Sit comfortably and prepare your body and mind for meditation.*

- **Sit in Meditation:** Find a comfortable place to sit, whether on a chair or the floor, and meditate in a secluded area, free from disturbance, such as a quiet room, garden, or even your car.
- **Separate awareness from attention:** Place your hands in your lap, with one thumb resting on the other, and allow your attention to rest on that point of touch. Then relax into the background awareness of your whole body, sitting in meditation, separating the awareness of your body in the background from the focus of your attention in the foreground. You may have to play around with this for a while to get used to it. From this point on, you will learn to sense all experiences through your body while noticing any time that your attention habitually wanders from the touch of your thumbs. This division between foreground and background separation will become very important as your meditation deepens. (Article next section).

- **Reflect Gratefully:** To begin your meditation, allow your eyelids to gently close by relaxing them, and to sweeten your mind, reflect on simple things you are grateful for in your life. Notice how gratitude feels in your body and mind as you gain insight.

## **Step 2: Mindfulness.**

*To develop mindfulness, gradually add these experiences to the tapestry of your awareness.*

- **Flow of Sound:** Develop mindfulness by listening to the flow of sounds around you. Let the flow and change of sound ground you in the present.
- **Touch of clothing:** Once you feel settled, include the experience of your clothing resting on your body.
- **Touch of air:** Start to notice the coolness and warmth of air touching your skin.

## **Step 3: Belly Breaths.**

*As mindfulness grows, further relax awareness into your body with softening belly breaths.*

- To breathe in, slowly extend the lower part of your belly away from your body and notice how the breath comes in through your nose.
- To breathe out, slowly lower your belly and notice how the breath goes back through your nose. Play around with this belly-breathing movement, being careful not to overextend your belly or to try too hard. This is simply a way of reminding your body to relax.
- *Observe the effect:* After ten breath cycles, allow your breathing to happen naturally and see how your body feels over the next few minutes. Notice any changes in how your body feels, such as your breathing becoming deeper and your body feeling more relaxed.

## **Step 4: Body Breaths.**

*Once you are comfortable with belly breathing, learn to breathe up into your whole body.*

- Extend the base of your ribs slightly outward and slowly breathe from your belly up into your chest, filling your chest like a balloon.
- Allow the breath to go out slowly, and feel your body relax with the out-breath. The secret is to allow your body and rib cage to rest on your lungs as they inflate and deflate. This allows your body muscles to stretch and fully relax with each breath.
- *Observe the effect:* After taking five breath cycles, remove your palms and allow your breathing to return to its natural state, noticing any feelings of increased relaxation and comfort within your body.
- **Note:** Once you understand how to take a softening breath in this way, you no longer need to use your palms to feel the breath and can leave them, with thumbs touching, in your lap.

## **Step 5: Enjoy Relaxing.**

*Your next step is to learn to enjoy the relaxed feeling of your body and allow it to grow.*

- Relaxing your body with softening breaths can only take meditation so far. For relaxation to deepen you need to actively enjoy how pleasant it feels to relax.
- Once you have completed the previous steps, place your palms back in your lap with thumbs touching, and begin to let go of any intentional control of your breathing, allowing it to occur

naturally for the rest of the meditation. Focus on the gentle stretch and relaxation of each in-breath and out-breath.

- Take a moment to release extra effort in your shoulders, chest, and upper back by slowly letting them drop with each exhale. Allow the feeling of relaxation to flow through your arms, hands, legs, and feet and most importantly, enjoy the feeling of relaxation.
- *Restlessness*: If you feel any restlessness building in your body as the desire to move around, take a few more slow belly breaths and relax.

**Tip 1:** *As you relax in Steps 1-5, you can develop insight (understanding) about feelings of restlessness in your body. Insight into physical restlessness is developed by being curious about any feelings of restlessness or the desire to move around, particularly when you begin your meditation or near the end. Playfully learn how to settle these feelings of restlessness using slow belly breaths as in Step 3. Understanding restlessness and how to calm it will teach you how to truly relax and let go, in all aspects of your life.*

**Tip 2:** *At this stage of meditation, your mind will wander to thoughts, become sleepy, or even forget that you are meditating. This is a normal part of meditating in daily life and should not be taken personally. These are simply mental habits we have developed throughout our life, and as your mind becomes familiar with how nice it is to relax and let go, all these things will settle down. During Meditation Skill 01, all you need to focus on at this time is learning to calm physical restlessness and to develop relaxation and comfort sitting in meditation. This is a foundation for Meditation Skill 02: Mind Relaxation.*

**Tip 3:** *Positivity is everything in insight meditation. Everything can improve in some way, even if it is just a little bit. Little improvements accumulate into significant life changes. If you have a habit of feeling stressed, you can learn how to be a little less stressed. If you tense up in your body during the day, you can learn how to be a little more relaxed during the day, and so on. Each Meditation Skill in this course will offer you its own reward that will significantly transform your life. I encourage you to recognise and celebrate each one as you develop it. This will lead you in the right direction.*

### **MIDL Insight Meditation System: Donation-based Course.**

<https://midlmeditation.com/midl-meditation-system>

MIDL is a donation-based Buddhist Insight Meditation Course designed to be integrated into daily life by Stephen Procter. MIDL employs a gentle approach to insight meditation, where meditators begin by learning to relax through slow, gentle breathing. This approach to meditation is known as softening. It allows meditators to experience benefits such as greater relaxation in their body, lower stress and the experience of anxiety with a few weeks of practice. MIDL is practised by following instructions in an in-depth insight meditation course designed for family and work life. MIDL also integrates into a free-flowing retreat practice based on developing calm for insight.

The attitude behind MIDL is: "Everything can improve a little bit, and success comes from celebrating these accumulating little successes."