

# Meditation Skill 02: Softening Into Breathing

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## Summary

Your development of skill in softening continues by learning to feel and 'borrow' the natural relaxation that arises within your body when you let go of all effort with each out-breath.

The word 'borrow' means to align your awareness with the subtle pleasure of the relaxation of each out-breath, and to borrow it in the same way that you would borrow the momentum when pushing a swing in a park.

Just as you align your momentum with the momentum of the swing when pushing it to borrow that momentum; you align your awareness with the subtle pleasure of the relaxation of your body with each out-breath, to borrow the subtle pleasure of relaxation.

## Detailed Instructions

### What You Are Learning this Lesson

To bring deep relaxation to your body with slow softening breaths.

### Create Your Posture for Meditation

Begin meditation by sitting comfortably on a chair or the floor. Seated, place the tips of your fingers below your belly button and slightly press in.

Allow your eyelids to gently close over and relax, feeling that relaxation and bring to mind the purpose of this meditation: to bring deep relaxation to your body with slow softening breaths.

## 1. Slowly Breathe Using Your Lower Abdomen

(10 repetitions)

Seated, place the tips of your fingers just below your belly button and slightly press in. Gently lift your fingers by slowly extending your lower abdominal muscles outwards away from your body. Notice how this draws the breath in.

Slowly lower your fingers back inwards again by releasing your lower abdominal muscles, notice how this lets the breath go out.

### **Tip:**

Once comfortable, gradually slow down this movement until you find your calm point, the right rhythm and pace for you.

Tune into how good it feels, the subtle pleasure of each release.

## 2. Next, Bring the Breath up into Your Chest

**(Repeat 10 times with step 2)**

Leave one palm below your belly button and the other at the top of your chest. Start by breathing in your belly then push your ribs out a little and bring the breath into the top of your chest. As your body deflates with the out-breath relax your chest, shoulders and upper back.

Feel your body become heavy.

Let go of all effort with each deflation.

### **Tip:**

Be curious in regard to what it means to 'borrow' the natural relaxation of each out-breath. There is an inherent pleasure of relaxation, a sense of ease, of release, that can be accessed every time your body deflates with each out-breath.

Begin to cultivate the Enlightenment Factor of Joy by accessing the subtle pleasure of that release, the letting go of effort in your body.

## Allow Your Breathing to Calm Naturally

**(15 minutes)**

Lower your hands and allow your breathing to calm naturally until it is flowing freely by itself. Breathing will become gentle, still, free from control. Align your awareness with the gentle deflation of each out-breath, giving up all effort to control the breathing along its length. Allow your body to become heavy and your mind to become settled and still.

Observe the desire to control as over-effort and relax this effort whenever it arises.

Investigate what it means to align your awareness with the natural deflation of your body with each out-breath.

### **Be curious in regard to:**

- Learn what it means to give up all effort within your body. To allow gravity to balance you and the earth to support you.
- Learn what it means to access the subtle pleasure of your body as it relaxes with each out-breath.
- Learn what it means to align your awareness with the pleasure of letting go, of giving up, of releasing of effort within your body.