

# Meditation Skill 09: Knowing In & Out Breaths

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## Summary

Once you are confident in your ability to meditate using Markers 1-5, it is time to include your sixth meditation object, awareness of in and out-breathing.

Once your attention has settled on the natural flow of breath within your body, you will start to become more aware regarding whether the breath is coming in or going out.

To help clarify this it is useful to tune into the natural pleasure of each breath. The gentle stretch of your body as the breath draws in, and the natural relax of effort that comes as the breath goes out.

I find it helpful to allow awareness to rest inside my lungs.

Stretch, relax, it feels good.

It is easier to develop continuous attention by tuning into the pleasure that is found within experiences then by effort or force.

## Detailed Instructions

### What You Are Learning this Lesson

To be aware of each in and out-breath to develop initial samadhi.

### 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.

## Know if The Breath is Coming in, or Going Out

### MARKER 6

Notice that you can know if your breath is drawing into your body, or if it is going out again. Establish a continuous stream of remembering regarding knowing each in, and out-breath.

Learn to hold a continuous knowing of what each breath cycle is doing.

Once again you are not focusing on the breath at this stage but rather holding a remembering within your mind, of what the breath is doing. In each breath cycle, follow each out-breath to its end, relax, and become aware of each in-breath as it draws back in.

#### **Three things are held in mind at this stage:**

1. Relaxing in the pause after each out-breath.
2. Knowing if the breath is drawing in or going out.
3. A continuous stream of remembering of these two.

To help train this knowing you can silently say "in" as the breath draws in, and "out" as the breath goes out.

Once your attention aligns with each breath abandon using the silent words (labels) and learn to remember each breath, without a training aid.

## If Your Attention Wanders or You Control the Breath

In mindfulness of breathing, we change the way that we deal with distraction.

1. When you notice that your attention has wandered:
2. Soften awareness back into your body to ground it.
3. Experience what it feels like to be present.
4. Reflect on what it felt like to be distracted.

Let a slow breath out through your nose, relax, and wait for the breath to draw back in by itself. Thereby resetting the natural breath.

If you notice that you are controlling your breathing:

1. Let a slow breath out through your nose, relax, and wait for the breath to draw back in by itself. Thereby resetting the natural breath. You can also practice weakening the desire to control using Meditation Skill 08.

## A Note on Meditative Hindrances

If Directed Thinking (6) and Wandering (7) continue at this stage, then they will most likely be accompanied by a re-emerging of Habitual Forgetting (4).

This happens due to a weakening of curious attention regarding breath experience and the observation of attention. It is the mental factor of curiosity that stimulates interest, and the mental factor of interested attention that develops the clear perception necessary for mindfulness.

So, without curiosity, mindfulness will weaken, and Habitual Forgetting will return.

To the meditator this can appear as a failure of skill because of the apparent collapse of samadhi, Doubt (8) may arise.

This collapse is not a sign of lack of skill but rather a collapse of samadhi due to the relationship between deep relaxation and the habitual hijacking of attention into a state of delusion.

This delusive state is normal for the habitual mind in everyday life, so this is not a failure of the meditators part but a simple matter of patiently retraining the mind regarding deep relaxation and attention structure.

Collapses of samadhi due to imbalances is the ideal time for the meditator to develop the perception of anatta (not-self) regarding attention.

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