

A woman with her hair in a bun is sitting in a meditative pose on a balcony. She is wearing a white tank top and light-colored leggings with perforated sections. Her hands are resting on her chest and abdomen. The background shows a city skyline at dusk. The entire image has a blue color cast.

ANGEL'S FRIENDLY COACHING

GUIDED MEDITATION:
**MINDFULNESS OF
BREATH**

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| Guided Meditation: Mindfulness of Breath

1. Settle into a comfortable sitting position, either on a straight-backed chair or on a soft surface on the floor, with your buttocks supported by cushions or a low stool. If you use a chair, it is very helpful to sit away from the back of the chair to support your spine. If you sit on the floor, it is helpful if your knees actually touch the floor; experiment with the height of the cushions or stool until you feel comfortable and firmly supported.
2. Allow your back to adopt an erect, dignified, and comfortable posture. If sitting on a chair, place your feet flat on the floor, with your legs uncrossed. Gently close your eyes. It may help to imagine a light thread attached to the back of your scalp pulling your head gently upwards and allowing your spine to lengthen.
3. Bring your awareness to the level of physical sensations by focusing your attention on the sensations of touch and pressure in your body, making contact with the floor and whatever you are sitting on. Spend a minute or two exploring these sensations.
4. Now bring your awareness to the changing patterns of physical sensations in the lower abdomen as the breath moves in and out of your body (When you first try this practice, it may be helpful to place your hand on your lower abdomen and become aware of the changing pattern of sensations where your hand makes contact with your abdomen, Having "tuned in" to the physical sensations in this area in this way, you can remove your hand and continue to focus on the sensations in the abdominal wall.)
5. Focus your awareness on the sensations of slight stretching as the abdominal wall rises with each in-breath, and of gentle deflation, as it falls with each out-breath. As best you can, follow with your awareness the changing physical sensations in the lower abdomen all the way through as the breath enters your body on the in-breath and all the way through as the breath leaves your body on the out-breath, perhaps noticing the slight pauses between one breath and the following out-breath, and between one out-breath and the following breath.
6. There is no need to try to control the breathing in any way—simply let the breath breathe itself. As best you can, also bring this attitude of allowing the rest of your experience. There is nothing to be fixed, no particular state to be achieved. As best you can, simply allow your experience to be your experience, without needing it to be other than it is.
7. Sooner or later (usually sooner), your mind will wander away from the focus on the breath in the lower abdomen to thoughts, planning, daydreams, drifting along—whatever. This is perfectly OK—it's simply what minds do. It is not a mistake or a failure. When you notice that your awareness is no longer on the breath, gently congratulate yourself—you have come back and are once more aware of your experience! You may want to acknowledge briefly where the mind has been ("Ah, there's thinking"). Then, gently escort the awareness back to a focus on the changing pattern of physical sensations in the lower abdomen, renewing the intention to pay attention to the ongoing in-breath or out-breath, whichever you find.



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8. However often you notice that the mind has wandered (and this will quite likely happen over and over and over again), as best you can congratulate yourself each time on reconnecting with your experience in the moment, gently escorting the attention back to the breath, and simply resume following in awareness the changing pattern of physical sensations that come with each in-breath and out-breath.

9. As best you can, bring a quality of kindness to your awareness, perhaps seeing the repeated wanderings of the mind as opportunities to bring patience and gentle curiosity to your experience.

10. Continue with the practice for 15 minutes, or longer if you wish, perhaps reminding yourself from time to time that the intention is simply to be aware of your experience in each moment, as best you can, using the breath as an anchor to gently reconnect with the here and now each time you notice that your mind has wandered and is no longer down in the abdomen, following the breath. You may wish to focus your concentration by counting your breaths. On the out-breath say "one" quietly to yourself and then "two" on the next out-breath. When you reach "ten", start at the beginning again, saying "one", "two", "three" on the out-breaths.

11. Mindfulness exercises are best done before eating or before breakfast or the evening meal. If you have had a drink or used any other drugs, allow their effects to wear off before trying to meditate