

Anapanasati Meditation Instructions

Seat yourself in an upright posture, with your spine straight, your shoulder blades relaxed down your back towards the floor, and your hands comfortably on your legs or in your lap. With eyes closed, allow your attention to be lightly placed where you notice the movement of breath between the nostrils and upper lip—the “anapana spot.” The object of meditation is the *breath*. You are to *know* the breath, as it *passes* the anapana spot, on each inhalation and exhalation.

When the attention wanders from knowing the breath as it moves across the anapana spot, gently return it, without judgment or self-criticism.

One method of concentrating awareness is to count breaths. The Sayadaw suggests counting from 1 to 8 and back down from 8 to 1, with each progressive inhalation and exhalation as a unit. For example, a single in-breath and one out-breath is 1. Once concentration begins unifying, you can drop the counting if you like.

Another method to develop concentrated awareness is to notice the length of the breath, long or short. This is not an evaluation by the mind, but an aware knowing. It is also not “noting,” as in associating a word to the knowing. Simply, upon the inbreath, one knows whether it is long or short. On the outbreath, one knows whether it is long or short. As with counting, this can be dropped once concentration develops.

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