

## BREATH COUNTING MEDITATION

1.

Sit in a comfortable position. *See options on page 2.*

2.

Keep your eyes slightly open,  
your gaze resting on the ground several feet in front of you.

3.

Become aware of your breathing. Breathe through your nose, easily and naturally.

4.

Take a quick sweep from the top of your head down to your feet. Check in with your body.  
Notice areas of tightness, pressure or discomfort.  
Take a moment to breathe into each area. Focus on the exhale.  
After you breathe all the way out, wait a lil' minute, just a few seconds before allowing the breath  
to naturally fill the chest and belly. Imagine the breath like the tide come back into shore

5.

As you become familiar and comfortable with the rhythm of your own breath,  
after a full exhale, mentally begin counting. "One." Inhale, exhale, "Two",  
When you arrive at 10, return to 1.

6.

When you lose count, you become distracted, you find yourself counting 17, 18,  
or mentally sitting beside a lake or on a nice beach simply return to "One".

Exhale completely, even gently contract the muscles of the pelvic floor, gently pushing the last bit of air out.

7.

Try Breath Counting 5 minutes daily.  
As you become more familiar and comfortable, lengthen how long you sit.  
Explore how it feels to sit for 20 or 30 minutes, even up to 1 hour.  
You can also gently pepper the practice, all day, particularly when distracted as a gesture to restore focus.  
In doing this breath counting, you are actively cultivating focus and conscious awareness.

**Set aside any idea of measuring the *success* of your practice.**

When distracting thoughts happen, trust me they will, simply begin with a new breath and return to "One."  
For more information about the physical and mental health benefits of meditation, have a look at my website, the  
"Why Meditate" series. If you begin to do more regular meditation, at some point, it will help to work with someone  
on posture and the mind to support learning and evolution of your tuning in.

**Zoe aka Amy Darling**

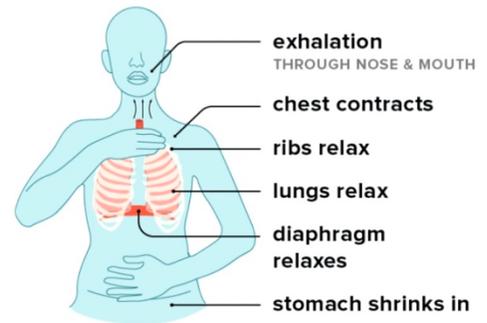
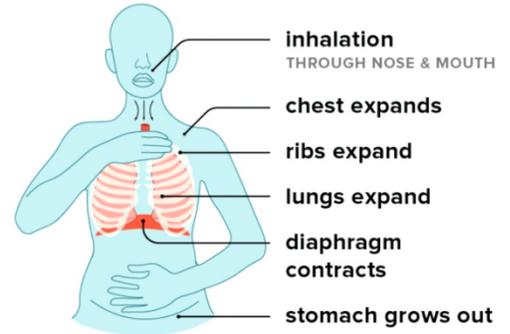
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- Experiment with different meditation postures.
- Explore a sense of stability in the lower body and lightness in the upper body.
- When the lower back is naturally and yet firmly curving forward, we experience less fatigue in the back muscles and are able to breathe more easily. The spine can extend upward.
- Allow your hands to rest in a comfortable position in your lap or on your knees.
- If sitting on the floor, you can sit with your legs crossed in Burmese, half or full lotus, or kneeling position. Optimally, knees will be firmly rooted on the ground, hips a bit higher than knees.
- If seated in a chair, sit forward on the edge with a sense of length in your spine, a sense of nobility.
- As you inhale, the diaphragm moves downward. Allow the belly to expand outward (see below).
- As you exhale, the diaphragm contracts upward. The belly draws naturally back toward the spine.
- If you tend to breathe in your upper chest, or hold your breath without noticing, try resting your hands on your lower abdomen and feel as the breath expands to fill them and then the belly softens back toward the spine.



Try it out! And don't force the breath. We won't win an arm-wrestling match with our own body. We do better to slowly invite the breath into the belly just by noticing. You don't need any special clothes or props or beliefs to pause and follow your breath with some attention. If you decide to incorporate meditation as a regular part of your life, it can be really helpful and enjoyable to share meditation with a group. There are resources in many religious and secular traditions. Contact me with questions and curiosities about this practice and meditation in general. Supporting people to tune in is my greatest passion!!!

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