



MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

FOR SHAMATHA PRACTICE

Choose a quiet and uplifted place to do your meditation practice. Sit cross-legged on a meditation cushion, or if that's difficult, sit on a straight-backed chair with your feet flat on the floor without leaning against the back of the chair.

Place your hands palms down on your thighs and take an upright posture with a straight back, relaxed yet dignified. With your eyes open, let your gaze rest comfortably as you look slightly downward about six feet in front of you.

Place your attention lightly on your out breath, while remaining aware of the environment around you. Be with each breath as the air goes out through your mouth and nostrils and dissolves into the space around you. At the end of each out-breath, simply rest until the next breath goes out. For a more focused meditation you can follow both out breaths and in breaths.

Whenever you notice that a thought has taken your attention away from the breath, just say to yourself, "thinking," and return to following the breath. In this context, any thought, feeling, or perception that distracts you is labeled "thinking."

Alternatively, it is not necessary to say "thinking" to yourself. When a thought arises, you may just gently note it and return your attention to your breath and posture.

Thoughts are not judged as good or bad.

At the end of your meditation session, bring calm, mindfulness, and openness into the rest of your day.

Adapted by Westchester Buddhist Center from instructions written by James Ishmael Ford and printed in the Shambhala Sun.