

Simple Meditations Part 2: One to Ten Counting Meditation

1-10 Meditation Instructions

This meditation is for beginners at any stage of life.

Begin by finding a comfortable position, sitting or lying down. If you decide to sit, placing both feet flat on the floor and placing your hands in your lap is suggested. Whether you choose to sit or lie down, the goal is to be comfortable while maintaining alertness.

When meditating, you can close your eyes or keep them open, whichever feels more comfortable. If you keep your eyes open, focusing a soft gaze on a point a few feet in front of you can be helpful.

Begin by taking 2 or 3 deep, slow breaths. Breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. Then allowing your breathing deep to return to its natural rhythm.

As you pay attention to the natural rhythm of your breath, you might notice that breathing has four repeating components: the inhale, a short pause, the exhale, and another short pause before the next in-breath. These four components constitute one cycle.

Breathe for a few moments and in the background notice as best you can the four components of the breath cycle.

Since the pauses in the cycle of breathing are short and subtle, especially the pause between the in and out-breath, you might find it simpler to pay attention to the in and out-breaths alone, so one in-breath and one out-breath define the simplified cycle.

It can be useful to give the mind a task like counting in addition to following the breath, so the mind wanders less often during meditation. It is the nature of the mind to have thoughts. Therefore, becoming distracted by thoughts of the past or the future is going to happen, and it is natural.

Counting from one to ten can help keep the mind focused. After one cycle of in and out-breath, silently say “One” to yourself. After the next in and out-breath, silently say “Two.” Continue this pattern with each cycle of in and out-breath, saying “Three,” and so on until you reach “Ten.” Then start over again at “One.”

When you become aware that the mind is distracted by thinking, bring your attention back to the breath and counting. If you forget what number you are on, simply start over with “One”.

It is important not to judge yourself harshly when you notice your mind has wandered. Recognize when you are distracted and gently bring your awareness back to the object of

meditation, which is breathing and counting the breath cycles during this practice. Each time you realize your attention has drifted and you refocus, it is a moment of deep mindfulness.

Practicing this meditation once a day for 5-10 minutes may help reduce stress, strengthen the mind's ability to stay focused, and support seeing what is going on in the mind and body with greater clarity. Slowly increase the length of the meditation as you feel more comfortable with the technique.