

The Sitting Practice

“Sitting quietly, doing nothing, not knowing what is next and not concerned with what was or what may be next, a new mind is operating that is not connected with the conditioned past and yet perceives and understands the whole mechanism of conditioning.”

Excerpt from *The Work of This Moment*, by Toni Packer

What It Is:

1. Sitting is a simple skill that involves focusing your mind on the present.
2. Sitting is a practice in observation and discovery of our true nature in the here and now.
3. Sitting is like exercising a muscle that you've never really worked out before. It takes consistent practice to get comfortable.
4. You do not have to believe anything to do sitting – it does not exclude any religion.

How To Do It:

1. Find a quiet and private place where you can be comfortable and free from distractions.
2. Sit in an upright posture with a straight back in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Place your hands palms-down on your thighs; be relaxed yet dignified.
3. With your eyes open, let your gaze rest comfortably as you look slightly downward about six feet in front of you (you can close your eyes if there is a visual distraction).
4. Take a few deep breaths, and feel the points of contact between your body and the chair or floor. Notice the sensations associated with sitting--feelings of pressure, warmth, tingling, vibration, etc.
5. Bring your awareness to your breath. Do not change your breathing; begin to observe it without controlling its pace or intensity. Simply breathe naturally.
6. Focus your attention on how the body moves with each inhalation and exhalation. Notice the movement of your body as you breathe. Observe your chest, shoulders, rib cage, and belly.
7. If your mind wanders with thoughts, sensations or emotions; gently let them come in and then release them with an exhale. Return your focus back to your breath.
8. As the time comes to a close, sit for a minute to become aware of where you are. Then get up gradually.
9. Do this for 4-5 minutes at a time to start, and then gradually increase the time, as you get more comfortable. Be patient with yourself. Like any new skill, it will take practice.

Guided Meditation (Audio):

The buddhanet.net site offers free audio resources for a guided meditation (sitting) practice. This can be useful to get you started if you are unable to control your thoughts when doing it on your own.

Buddhanet site: [buddhanet.net/audio-meditation.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/audio-meditation.htm)

- Body scan:
 - <http://www.buddhanet.net/mp3/huxter/huxter%20body%20scan.mp3>
- Progressive relaxation:
 - http://www.buddhanet.net/mp3/huxter/huxter_progressive%20relaxation.mp3
- Mindfulness of breath -
 - http://www.buddhanet.net/mp3/huxter/huxter_mindfulness%20of%20breath.mp3