

Counting Meditation

Webinar Handout

Overview

This webinar introduced a silent mindful meditation followed by a counting meditation.

Introduction to a Counting Meditation

Sometimes it can be difficult to just sit and notice the sensations of your breath. One way to strengthen your mindfulness muscle is to do a counting meditation. This practice focuses your attention on your breath by counting the breaths as they go in and out.

Counting Meditation Practice

1. Quietly count your breaths in and out until you reach 10 full breaths where you are completely present for all 10. "One" counts for a breath in and out. So one round would start "one" in... and out... "two" in ... and out ... "three" in ... and out until you reach 10. While you are counting, if you are distracted by a thought, start again at "one."
2. Next, try to direct your inhale deep into your belly. Breathe in for a count of four (silently counting out "one," "two," "three," "four"). Hold for a count of three. And exhale for a count of four. Here is one cycle using this new breath pattern:
 - Breathe in "one," "two," "three," "four."
 - Hold the breath in "one," "two," "three."
 - Breathe out "one," "two," "three," "four."

Mindful Activity

Consider keeping a stressful events calendar, tracking events during the week and your response to them. This exercise allows you to take a step back from a stressful situation and better assess it. With practice, you'll notice that you won't immediately react to a situation. Instead, you'll have a moment to pause and come up with the best solution or response.

When you are in a stressful moment, try to become mindful and ask yourself:

- Why is this event stressful?
- How is it triggered?
- Is it pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
- How aware am I that this is a stressful event?
- How do I work with it?
- What did I learn from it?