



Mindful Walking Practices

Simple Walking Meditation

You might find mindful walking helpful for settling an active mind. This is a very simple practice of noticing the sensations in your body as you walk:

- Begin with the intention to pay attention.
- You can walk slightly slower than normal or just pick a normal pace.
- Begin by identifying the predominant sensations you are noticing. Is it your legs lifting your feet, your feet as they place back on the ground, your arms swinging, your chest as you breathe?
- Pick one sensation and pay attention to it as you walk. For example, you could pick the feet and notice as you lift and place them.
- If thoughts arise as you walk, simply recognize them, then go back to the sensation of walking. (If you realize you were lost in thought, it is not a problem, it is perfectly normal. Just go back to the sensations of walking.)
- Walk like this for five minutes.

As you notice these sensations of walking, you may find it easier to drop the tendency to worry, plan, or ruminate on something that just happened.

Other Mindful Walking Practices

Learning to bring mindfulness into different activities helps bring the benefits more fully into daily life, since we don't stay in only one posture all day.

- Make a note to pause and pay attention once in a while as you are walking. You can do this anywhere—while walking down the street, at work, at home.
- Decide to be aware every time you walk a certain route (for example, the walk to the kitchen). You can do this by asking “What’s one new thing I can notice?”
- Tune into the sounds you hear when walking, or the sights. Don’t try to figure them out or evaluate them (“what is that bird? that is noisy!”). Listen and see from an open and receptive space of mind.
- Stop and take at least one mindful breath when you get to your destination.

Slow Walking Practice

This is a more formal practice that is best done in a quiet, private place. Find a spot where you can walk forward and back approximately 10 paces in each direction without obstructions.

- Stand for a minute and take a few mindful breaths.
- Lift your right foot, move it forward, and place it on the ground in front of you. As you do so, gently note the actions of lifting, moving, and placing as a support to connecting your attention to the physical sensations of each of these phases of movement.
- Do the same with the left foot—lifting, moving, placing.
- Move slowly (but not so slowly that you lose your balance), and be attentive to the sensations in the feet and legs. (Note, you don’t look at your legs and feet, rather keep your gaze and head upright as you walk.)
- Feel the sensations instead of thinking about them. If the gentle noting (see above) is distracting or leads to endless thinking, then don’t use it and stay with the felt-sense of the movement.
- When you reach the end of your path, stop, breathe, and slowly turn around.
- Repeat in the opposite direction.
- When you are done, take a few breaths.

