

From mountain to sea

Educational Psychology Service Mindful Breathing



We breathe all day and all night long for the whole of our lives. How often do you pay attention to yourself breathing? The chances are that for most of the time, it is an entirely unconscious action.

When we breathe mindfully, we make a conscious effort to 'notice' our breath coming into our body and then leaving our body again. We might focus on how our throat feels as we inhale and exhale, we might notice how our muscles move, where we feel pressure. It is up to you what you focus on, what is important is that you try and keep the focus there throughout:

Sit on a chair with your feet on the ground. Close your eyes and your mouth and begin to notice your breath entering and leaving your body through your nose.

Notice how breathing feels:

- **Is your breath cold?**
- **Is it warm?**
- **Where is it cold/warm?**
- **What is your belly doing?**
- **Can you feel it rising and falling as you breathe?**
- **How do your shoulders feel?**
- **Do you notice tension or are they relaxed?**

Choose your focus and continue breathing and noticing for as long as you are able.....or until you are ready to stop.

When you start paying attention to your breathing in a focused and mindful way, it can feel very alien. You might be aware of your mind wandering. This is perfectly normal.

If your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your focus. By noticing your mind wandering, you are in fact, being mindful. Remember not to judge yourself, just bring your attention back to your breath and your focus.

As you sit, breathing, you might notice aches and pains or feelings in your body that you have not been aware of before. Try and notice them, without questioning or speculating. Accept them and notice whether the sensations change as you continue breathing. If you need to move, move slowly, noticing how the feelings change as you do so.

Over time, you will find it easier to notice without attachments – keep practising!