

## Basic Mindfulness Meditation

1. Sit comfortably. You don't have to twist yourself into a cross-legged position—unless you want to, of course. You can just sit in a chair. (You can also stand up or lie down, although the latter can sometimes result in an unintentional nap.) Whatever your position, you should keep your spine straight, but don't strain.
2. Feel your breath. Pick a spot: nose, belly, or chest. Really try to *feel* the in-breath and then the out-breath.
3. This one is the key: Every time you get lost in thought—which you will, thousands of times—gently return to the breath. I cannot stress strongly enough that forgiving yourself and starting over is the whole game. As my friend and meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg has written, "Beginning again and again is the actual practice, not a problem to overcome so that one day we can come to the 'real' meditation."

### tips

- To stay focused on the breath, try making a soft mental note, like "in" and "out." (Don't get too mesmerized by the note itself, just use it to direct your attention to the actual sensory experience of the breath.)
- Another trick for staying focused is to count your breaths. Start at one, and every time you get lost, start over. When you reach ten—if you ever reach ten—start back at one.
- Try to meditate every day. Regularity is more important.