

The Three-Minute Breathing Space Practice

The purpose of this practice is to create a sort of sequence of steps to achieve a greater sense of awareness and awake in the present moment. Each stage emphasises shifting our focus by paying attention, checking in, and moving on. Accordingly, each step of the Three-Minute Breathing Space is roughly one minute in length.

There are three steps to the practice:

Stage 1

Become still wherever you are – either lying, sitting or standing, choose a posture where you will be as comfortable as possible, then lightly close your eyes.

Ask yourself the following questions:

'What is going on for me at this moment/right now' or 'How am I feeling right now?'

Shift your position slightly to become aware of your feet on the floor, the feel of your body in contact with the chair. Allow your weight to sink into the points of contact between the body and the floor, chair or bed, whether that's your feet, your buttocks or your back.

What sensations are there, right now? If you notice any tension or resistance towards painful or unpleasant sensations, gently turn towards them. Accept them as best you can.

In your own time, take your awareness from one part of your body to the next, exploring with a kindly curiosity and just noticing what is there, what you feel.

Stage 2

Bringing your awareness to the breath – becoming aware of the fact that you are breathing. Letting the breath breathe itself without trying to change it in any way. Just feeling the sensations of the breath as it enters and leaves your body. Being aware of a swelling on the in-breath, and a subsiding on the out-breath.

Drop your awareness inside the breath and feel the different sensations in the front, back and sides of the body, inside the body and on the surface of the body. Feel all

the different sensations of the breath as it flows into and out of the body. Can you rest within the flow of the breath? Use the breath to anchor your awareness in the present moment and the body.

Stage 3

Gently broaden and expand your awareness to include the whole body. Feel the weight and shape of the body as it sits, lies or stands.

Feel the breath in the whole body. Imagine you are breathing in and out into the whole of the body.

Now broaden your awareness even further to become aware of sounds both inside and outside of the room. Be aware of other people around you.

Now gently open your eyes and move the body. As you re-engage with the activities of your day, see if you can carry with you the awareness that you've cultivated.