

Mindful breathing script

'The breath is always within us whilst we are alive. Learning to connect to the movement of the breath into and out of our bodies is an amazing and powerful way of bringing ourselves back into the moment. We can use mindful breathing wherever we are and whatever situation we find ourselves in, whether at home, work or school, or when we are out somewhere. It is probably one of the most beneficial resources I regularly use throughout the day. What I would now like to do is a mindful breathing guided meditation with you that lasts approximately six minutes. All you have to do is follow the instructions. Don't worry if your mind wanders, or if you notice thoughts start popping into your head. When you notice this, just bring your attention back to the movement of your breath into and out of your body. Part way through the meditation exercise I am going to ask you to start counting your breath, in for one, out for two, in for three, out for four and we will continue to do this all the way to 20. When we reach 20 we will start with one again. You are not meant to hold your breath for these numbers, but instead just count the number of the breath.'

'The first thing I would like you to do is to find somewhere quiet to sit for the next few minutes, get yourself into a really nice comfortable position sitting down, legs uncrossed, feet on the floor, rest your hands on your lap and if it feels comfortable close your eyes, or if you prefer, just settle yourself on a neutral gazing spot in front of you.'

(Pause)

'Then start to bring your awareness to the movement of the breath into and out of your body..... notice how the air enters you nose into your lungs..... and then back out from your lungs through your nose into the room again..... Don't try to speed it up or slow it down, just allow it to be whatever it needs to be in this moment in time.'

(Pause)

'Allow the breath to anchor you in this moment.'

(Pause)

'Anytime those thoughts try and creep on in, just notice them and accept them and just allow them to pass on by..... bringing your awareness back to the movement of the breath into and out of your body.'

(Pause)

'Sometimes it helps to think of the word CALM as you breathe in..... breathing in the calmness into the whole of your body..... and then think of the words LETTING GO as you breath out..... breathing in the calmness and then letting go.'

(Pause)

'Just notice those thoughts as they try and come on in, don't get cross with them, just notice them and allow them to move on past, bringing your awareness back to the breath.'

(Pause)

'Breathing in the calmness and then letting go.'

(Pause)

'In a moment I would like you to start counting the breath, breathing in for the count of one..... out for the count of two..... in for the count of three..... out for the count of four, all the way to 20, and when you reach 20, start with one again. We are not trying to hold your breath for these numbers, instead just counting the number of breaths.

So lets start by letting go of any of the air in your lungs, just breathing that out, and with the next breath in, breathing in for one..... then out for two..... breathing in for three..... out for four, and continue this in your own time all the way to 20, and when you reach 20 just start with one again.'

(Pause)

'Just noticing any of those thoughts that try and come in, just notice and allow them to move on past.'

(Longer pause)

'And then wherever you are with the movement of the breath, just start bringing your awareness to how your body is sitting on the chair, your feet resting on the floor, your hands resting on your lap. Notice the temperature of the air on your skin..... start wiggling your fingers and your toes..... and in your own time start opening up your eyes bringing your awareness back into the room.'

Finishing instructions

'When we use the mindful breathing throughout the day, the intention is to stay mindfully awake. However, if you are struggling with sleep: either dropping off to sleep or finding yourself waking up in the night and being plagued by thoughts, using mindful breathing at night time is a really effective way of bringing your awareness back to your breath and letting go of the thoughts. This is when I find it helpful to count the breath as it is focussing my attention on the breath rather than any thoughts. If you are doing this at night time, it is ok to have the intention of falling back to sleep. Sometimes it can happen very quickly, sometimes it takes a bit longer, but regardless, when you bring your awareness to your breath, you will be in a calmer state and you will find it easier to fall back into sleep.'

Ref:

Dent, A (2019). Using Spirituality in Psychotherapy: The Heart Led Approach to Clinical Practice. Routledge.