

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation is a form of meditation that takes place while the human body is in action. Usually meditation takes place in relaxed and seated form with the person meditating sitting with their body relaxed and eyes closed. Walking meditation on the other hands takes place with open eyes and a more active body.

People like the idea of walking meditation because it allows them to meditate while engaging in an active and busy lifestyle. The truth is that some people simply can't find the time to sit down and meditate for 30 minutes a day. That being said, some of us do walk 30 minutes to work, 15 minutes to the grocery store and find time for a quick 10 minute walk through our own neighborhoods. Walking meditation is a great way to both exercise your mind and body at the same time.

Two of the major differences are first, that you must obviously keep your eyes open as walking with your eyes closed is dangerous. Secondly, when partaking in walking meditation you are usually more aware of your physical body since it is actively being used.

Step 1

Begin your walk by simply standing. Stay put and become aware of your entire body. Start by placing awareness below your ankles on your feet. Your feet help balance your body and they are always making constant adjustments that allow you to stand and remain balanced. Notice how the weight is distributed on both feet. Notice how the weight is distributed between the ball of your foot and the front of your foot. Notice the feeling of your toes touching each other. Take a moment and become as aware of your standing balance before you start with your walking meditation. Take 5 deep breaths in through your nose and then out through your mouth. As you do this try to release any stress or negative energy that you built up during the day. Sometimes people count a number on each breath to help center their mind on a number rather than focusing on any negative details which may have arisen during the day.

Step 2

Now that you have more awareness of your body we are going to start walking. After you have taken your 5 deep breaths start walking forward with your chosen foot. When you take this first step pay attention to how the step affects your entire body. Notice position changes, weight distribution and changes, notice how momentarily you are balancing on only one foot before your foot falls back to the earth and you are once again planted on both feet temporarily before your other foot leaves the ground to take another step forward.

When you're taking these first steps notice how the weight is being transferred for the ball to the sole of your foot with each step. We usually walk without thinking too much about how our body actually walks. In fact, we are so use to walking that we rarely need

to even think about the process of walking. Our body seems to walk without doing much in the way of making it walk. Walking meditation is a great way to rediscover your awareness with walking. Now that you have better awareness of your feet and balance and weight transfer within each of your feet, change your focus at this point to your ankle.

Notice the role your ankle joint plays in walking. Take the time to focus on all of the joints below your waist. Notice how each joint moves and interacts simultaneously to create a smooth walking motion. Notice how this happens without you paying too much attention to any of these physical details. Even though this happens without much thought, I want you to feel and see the complexities in human walking. Notice how many of your joints and body parts are working in conjunction to make walking possible. Now focus on your calf muscles. You can exaggerate the feeling you get when your leg pushes off the ground during a step just to become intimately familiar with the role of the calf during your meditation walk. Take a couple of steps where you exaggerate the feeling within the calf and then go back to normal walking.

Notice the feeling of your pants around your calf. Pay extra attention to the size, the amount of flexing necessary and the temperature of your calf at this point. Now turn your attention to your knee. Again, notice this joints interaction with the rest of your bodily joints, notice the way it moves, feel the knees power and notice the temperature of your knee. Now focus on your thigh, feel the clothing brushing against your thigh as you walk. Feel the muscles in both the back and the front of the thigh. Exaggerate and flex them for a few steps just to be extra aware of their presence and then go back into a normal walking meditation state.

Step 3

Now I want you to focus your attention on your belly and chest. Feel the clothing against those body parts. Let your shoulders hang freely and your arms flow naturally. Pay special attention to how wind moves around your body as you walk. Feel the wind and air hug you as you pass through it. Feel it between your fingertips. Notice your upper body joints; your elbows, your wrists and your shoulders. Now focus your energy on your neck and head. Notice how even slight changes in the muscles within your neck cause your head to move around dramatically. Notice how the heads balance is dependent on a consistent neck. Now allow your neck muscles to allow your head to drop so your eyes are looking down. Notice how this changes the experience of the walk. Now use your neck to pull your head up and look slightly upwards. Notice how this changes the experience of the walking meditation.

Now that you are fully aware of your joints, muscles, the wind around you and the complexities your movements but also aware of the ease at which you walk now I want you to focus your thoughts on the things around you and the things going through your mind. The purpose of this exercise isn't to feel bad or good, it's to be aware of the feelings your having. If you have an overall tone of negativity or positively just notice it without judgment and don't focus on it or dwell on it. Just notice it and let it pass. Some

of the things you think about may be positive or pleasant; others may be negative or unpleasant. Again, during this walking meditation the point is to just be aware, almost as a spectator as to the thoughts you are having. Allow everything to pass, but not first without noticing that they are going through your mind.

During this thinking stage, keep your eyes softly focused on your area ahead of you. Do not focus on any one thing in particular, just be alert and open to idea. If you notice things in the outside world that are unpleasant or pleasant be aware of them. Again, do not focus on them, but be aware of your feelings towards them. Let everything pass both physically and emotionally. Try to achieve a balance of external and internal awareness. Keep aware of your thoughts on your inside world and the outside world. Continue meditating in this fashion for as long as you like.

When you are ready stop your walking meditation slowly and find a place to stand once again without walking and become aware your standing, balanced self. Feel the difference in the standing state versus the walking state. Once again feel your toes touching each other. Notice the weight of your feet and how the weight is distributed. Feel both feet fully and notice their connection to the earth beneath you. You have now completed your first walking meditation.

Taken from <http://www.meditateclass.com/walking/index.html>