

OBSERVING YOUR BREATH



People often ask me for the easiest or quickest way to reduce their stress levels, and my answer is, “Breathe.” Simply focus your awareness on the sensation of your breath without changing it or judging it as good or bad. It only takes a few seconds to feel some beneficial effects, and the longer you simply observe your breathing, the calmer you will feel. Some of the nice things about your breath are that you always have it with you, it’s free, you already have some skill in using it, and it’s unequivocally healthy for you. So the next time you’re stuck in heavy traffic or the kids are screaming, take a few moments to shift your attention to your breath. Inhale and exhale.

Practice Log for Observing Your Breath

Find a minute or two each day to simply notice the sensation of breathing. Note your experiences, discoveries, and challenges. Notice if each day's experience is subtly different from another day. Record your experiences daily for at least a week, even if you don't practice for whatever reason. Make a note of anything that you notice. What was the activity like for you? What questions arose? What discoveries did you have? What difficulties did you notice?