

Calming Meditation

Teachers: Leave 10 or more seconds between instructions in order to give your students time to process them.

Take a comfortable seat. If you're sitting in a chair, it's okay to rest your back against the back of the chair, but it's best to sit up as straight as is comfortable.

Close your eyes.

Become aware of the sounds inside and outside the room—loud sounds, background sounds, pleasant sounds, unpleasant sounds.

Settle back and simply be aware of sound. There's no need to "reach out" to capture the sounds. Allow the sounds to come to you.

Now be aware of the points of contact between your hips and legs, and the chair. Be aware of the sensations of pressure and temperature.

Feel your feet resting on the floor.

Be aware of the sensations in your hands, noticing warmth, coolness, pressure, tingling.

Now become aware of your breathing. Without trying to change your breathing, simply tune into it.

Each time you inhale, make a silent suggestion to yourself to calm your body and mind.

Each time you exhale, make a silent suggestion to yourself to calm your body and mind.

So, with each inhalation, say to yourself, "Calm."

With each exhalation, say to yourself, "Calm."

Don't worry if your mind wanders. Mindfulness is not about getting rid of your thoughts.

When you notice that you're thinking, simply turn your attention back to your breathing and return to calming the body and mind with each inhalation and exhalation.

You may have to do this many times during a five-minute session. That's fine. It means that you're paying attention, and that's a positive thing.

Inhale, calm. Exhale, calm.

When you're ready to end the session:

Before you open your eyes, take a moment to tune into your body and mind. Do you feel a sense of calm?

Remember that you can do this any time you feel stressed or agitated. You can take 30 seconds, a minute or more, and calm your body and mind, simply by reminding yourself.



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Roger Des Rosiers (American, born 1935), detail of #9 *Grid Series*, circa 1988, dry mounting, oil, paste, colored pencil, monotype. Gift of Roger Des Rosiers, UMFA1994.021.001.