

Do Nothing Meditation

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

Many respected spiritual traditions, including Buddhism and Hindu Advaita just to name two, claim that the highest state of spiritual communion is actually present in our minds at all times.

And yet many meditation techniques focus on creating some special state that wasn't there before the meditation, and which goes away at some point after the meditation. If the highest state is actually present all the time, shouldn't it be possible to simply notice it without inducing some change, or special state?

That is exactly the purpose of the Do Nothing Meditation. This technique (which is really an un-technique) will allow you to contact the highest spiritual state without actually doing anything.

METHOD:

Summary

Each time you notice an intention to control or direct your attention, give it up.

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Long Version

- There is no need to get into any particular posture, unless you feel like it.
- Do not position your attention in any particular way.
- Let whatever happens happen.
- Any time you notice yourself doing anything intentionally, stop.
- Doing anything intentionally means something you can voluntarily control, and therefore can stop. If you cannot stop doing something, then it's not intentional, and therefore you don't need to try to stop doing it. So. Anything you can stop doing, stop doing.

Some examples of things you can stop doing are:

- Intentionally thinking
- Trying to focus on something specific
- Trying to have equanimity
- Trying to keep track of what's going on
- Trying to meditate

Let go of doing anything like this.

- Keep doing nothing for at least 10 minutes, or as long as you like.

HISTORY:

The Do Nothing meditation is a way of experiencing “contentless awareness.” It has many analogues in many traditions. For example, this leads to roughly the same experience as Krishnamurti's practice of “choiceless attention.”

It is related to meditations in the Tibetan tradition of dzogchen, as well as many lineages of Hindu Advaita, such as practiced by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, and so on.

Do Nothing meditation is considered to be an advanced or difficult meditation in many traditions. However, it has been noted by some teachers that beginners are capable of doing it.

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CAUTIONS:

It may be difficult for some people to notice any difference between the Do Nothing meditation and gross “monkey mind,” that is, the ceaseless, driven and fixated thoughts of the everyday neurotic mind. If this seems to be the case for you, it may be helpful to do a more structured technique.

NOTES:

This meditation is closely related to the Advaitic practice of neti-neti (“not this, not that”) and to the practice of Self Inquiry as taught by Ramana Maharshi. The techniques are somewhat different, but the intention and outcome are very similar.

