



Cheltenham Zen 6-week course

Meditation for beginners

Session 1: Introduction to mindfulness

This course is designed to give you experience of a range of meditative techniques and approaches which can benefit your life in many ways.

This week we have introduced the following ideas:

- **Meditation** is a formal practice in which we spend a period of time applying a specific technique.
- **We can meditate for many reasons:** to develop calmness and stability, to work with difficult emotions, to open the heart, to develop self-awareness.
- **There are many ways to meditate**, and we'll be exploring a range of them.
- **Mindfulness** is 'the awareness that arises by paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally' (Jon Kabat-Zinn).
- **A good sitting meditation posture** includes a stable, triangular base, an upright spine, a gentle tuck of the chin, and a relaxed body.
- **Building habits is easiest** if we set very achievable targets for ourselves.

Suggested home practice

Meditation works best when you do some every day. However, when you're first building the habit, it's best to aim for something you can definitely fit in.

This week's practice is mindful breath counting. See if you can do that a few times between now and the next session. The guided audio on my website is 10 minutes long, but it's a simple practice - if you only have 5 minutes, just do 5 minutes!

You might also like to try performing household tasks with a mindful attitude, walking or exercising mindfully, or introducing mindful moments to your day.

Guided audio

A guide to sitting posture and a 10-minute mindful breath counting meditation are available at my website, <https://www.cheltenhamzen.co.uk/audio.html>.