



Cheltenham Zen 6-week course

Meditation for beginners

Session 5: Stability and grounding

In this session we looked at how meditation helps us to develop focus, and how we can use that to live authentic lives embodying our deepest intentions.

This week we have introduced the following ideas:

- **Meditation develops focus.** We can think of this as concentration, stable attention, mental stillness, or simply the ability to stay with something without becoming distracted. Focus helps every aspect of our lives.
- **The mind likes to become still.** We can tap into deep inner resources of peace, nourishment and well-being through allowing the mind to settle. Taking an interest in the details of the object helps this process along.
- **Grounding ourselves** in our physical bodies and in the present moment helps to keep us from drifting into worries about the past or future, and represents the physical counterpart to the mental stillness of concentration meditation.
- **When we can express our deepest intentions and truths,** we live more authentic and fulfilling lives. This is scary but profoundly worthwhile!

Suggested home practice

This week's practice is concentration. You can use a candle, a flower or any other object that you like to look at, or you can use the breath if you prefer to meditate with your eyes closed.

Experiment with the grounding ('naikan') exercise. Breathe in, sweeping the arms out and up, opening the awareness wide; breathe out, drawing the arms down the front of the body, leading the attention down into the lower belly and legs. This can be done standing, sitting or lying down.

Guided audio

A 10-minute guided concentration practice is available at my website, <https://www.cheltenhamzen.co.uk/audio.html>, but you might not need it!