Mindful breathing

The basic practice: following the breath and coming back.

Set a timer for five minutes to begin with. Read this through once, then try it.

1. Sit in a way that is comfortable and upright, feet on the floor, hands resting. Close your eyes, or lower your gaze.
2. Notice the places where your body meets the chair and the floor.
3. Bring your attention to your breathing. You do not need to change it. Find where you feel it most clearly: the nostrils, the chest or the belly.
4. Follow one breath all the way in and all the way out. Notice the small pause before the next one.
5. Before long, your mind will wander: to plans, memories, sounds, an itch. That is what minds do.
6. When you notice it has wandered, note where it went ("planning", "worrying"), and gently bring your attention back to the breath. No telling off.
7. Do this again and again. Each time you come back is the practice working.
8. When the timer goes, widen your attention to your whole body and the room. Open your eyes.

Common experiences

- **"My mind would not stay still."** Nobody's does. You noticed, which is the point.
- **"I got sleepy."** Sit more upright, open your eyes, or practise at a different time of day.
- **"I felt restless."** Notice restlessness as a set of sensations. You can stay with it, or do a walking practice instead.

> **If the breath is not comfortable**
>
> For some people, focusing on breathing increases anxiety. Use another anchor: the sounds around you, or the feeling of your feet on the floor.

A week of practice

Day	How long	What I noticed
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com
This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.