

The Ten Breath Practice: A simple approach to mindfulness meditation

By Roberto Benzo MD

Track : 1 Introduction

The Ten Breath Practice is a simple way to train ourselves in mindfulness meditation that can make a big difference after just a few days of doing it.

The Ten Breath Practice is ridiculously simple. It can help us “taste life” right here right now and can give us the opportunity to stop and be there for the only piece of life we can appreciate and do something about: the present moment.

Some people say that mindfulness is just one thing: consciously breathing in and breathing out. Mindful breathing can clear the mind and calm us in the most difficult moments. It can be a great asset to transform the suffering within: that is why is so important and why we propose it.

By consciously breathing in, we bring our minds to our true home, our bodies, and allow ourselves to be in the here and the now (the address where we are supposed to reside but that we abandon so many times). When we have the opportunity to live each moment deeply we may have less chance to be pulled away by strong emotions, the past or the future: the effect of The Ten Breath Practice can be tremendous.

The Ten Breath Practice can be challenging at times, requiring courage and decision. However, we now know by science that habits create pathways in our brain and become then our “default mode.” If our reaction to events (good and the not-so-good ones) is taking **ten breaths** before reacting, we will have more options to respond, more presence and likely more happiness in our life.

With persistence, the Ten Breath Practice can become a great habit and an opportunity for a newer, more peaceful and happier you (regardless of what is happening—that many times is beyond our control).

Track 2: The Ten Breath Practice

- Slow down: Stop whatever you are doing. Bring your body to a relaxed and at the same time alert position: whatever that might be for you at the moment.
- Find your breath in your body by taking two or three deep breaths (if you want to , put your hands on your abdomen: notice the movement)
- Start your Ten Breath Practice by counting after every outbreath. In the initial two or three focus on what is going on in your mind at the moment without dealing with it, just noticing (like I am stressed or tense, or happy, or sad). Do not do anything about it *just notice*.
- Then, in the next three breathes feel your body as you breathe in and out, identifying areas of tension or relaxation that may be there. Make your outbreath more forceful and let you in breath be spontaneous.
- If you are in ta difficult moment, breathe in the difficulty and breath out ease to you, as if your body is able to cleanse the bad moment and return ease to you (you can secretly do this to other people that are suffering without them noticing it).
- In the last remaining breathes, return to the “just breathing,” resting in the openness of the mind: breathing in breathing out, single-tasking, just one thing.

This is it.