

a low-point for the metabolism and sleep can predominate more easily then. The duration of practice can be built up to 10, then 15, 20 and even up to 30 minutes or longer if required depending on one's time availability, motivation, needs and commitment.

Longer practices of meditation might be compared to 'full stops' punctuating our day. Regular short mindful pauses of 30 seconds to 2 minutes might be compared to 'commas'. These commas during the day can help to reinforce our ability to be mindful for the whole of the day including when we are not meditating. Even pausing only for long enough to take a couple of deep breaths can help break the build-up of tension and mental activity throughout the day. In fact, any activity done mindfully is

noticing what is happening there, what sensations are taking place, moment-by-moment. Practice cultivating an attitude of impartial awareness, that is, not having to judge the experiences as good or bad, right or wrong. Simply practice being at peace with our moment-by-moment experience just as it is, even if it is uncomfortable. It is our reactivity to emotional and physical discomfort which amplifies it. There is no need to change your experience from one state to another or to 'make something happen'. Observing the mind judge, criticize or become distracted, for example, are simply mental experiences to observe non-judgmentally as they come and go. As often as the attention wanders from an awareness of the body simply notice where the attention has gone and bring it back to an awareness of the body. It is not a problem that thoughts come in or the mind becomes distracted. They become a problem only if we view them as a problem.

The attention can be rested with breath as it passes in and out of the body. The point of focus could be right where the air enters and leaves through the nose, or it could be where the stomach rises and falls with the breath. Again, no force is required and in mindfulness there is no need to try and regulate the breathing; let the body do that for you. Again, if distracting thoughts and feelings come to our awareness, carrying the attention away with them, just be aware of them but let them come and go by themselves. There is no need to 'battle' with them or 'get rid' of them. There is no need even to try and stop these thoughts coming into mind, nor to try and force them out. Trying to force thoughts and feelings out just feeds them with attention, makes them stronger, and increases their impact. We are simply practicing being less preoccupied about them or reactive to them. They will settle by themselves and all the more quickly if we learn not to get involved in them.

When using the listening, the practice of restful attentiveness is similar to the body scan and breath