

SITTING SUGGESTIONS

Here are a few suggestions to help your sitting practice:

PHYSICAL POSITION – ON THE CUSHION

- o Back straight, stable, and balanced.
- o Think of the hips as a bowl. Tilt the bowl forward.
- o Knees lower than hips, support the knees if they don't rest easily on the floor.
- o Experiment with different positions: legs crossed in front, "kneeling", or whatever.

PHYSICAL POSITION – IN A CHAIR

- o Back straight, stable, and balanced.
- o Feet flat on the floor, hands on thighs or folded.
- o If you can, choose a "kitchen" chair: firm and comfortable. It's hard to stay comfortable and relaxed on a couch or a "comfy" chair.
- o Knees should not be higher than the hips.

CONCENTRATION PRACTICE

- o Relax into the body. Perhaps take a few deep breaths. Let go of the day. Notice the actual felt experience of the body; be specific in your attention.
- o Bring the attention to the breath, wherever it's easiest to "find".
- o Attention should be "bright" but relaxed. Focus on the felt physical sensations.
- o When you notice that the mind has wandered, bring your attention back to the breath without negative judgment. Continually returning to the breath strengthens your intention, like building a muscle.
- o You won't shut out the exterior world, nor will you stop all thinking. Just try to keep the breath "in the foreground" and let sounds and thoughts remain "in the background".
- o Noting: Try quietly saying to yourself "in" on the inhalation, "out" on the exhalation. Or "rising" and "falling". The noting should be "in the background". This is just a suggestion! Many teachers discourage this but we have found it helpful.
- o Counting. Try counting on each inhale. Count to eight and start over. Keep the counting in the background; the breath should still be the main focus of your attention. Again, this is only a suggestion.

DISTRACTIONS AND DISCOMFORT

This is where insight practice starts to come in. If your knee is bothering you, move your attention to the knee. Stop worrying about your knee, and focus on the actual felt sensation. Tingling? Throbbing? Don't get caught in the words, be with the experience and see what happens.

On the other hand, we are not here to test our pain threshold. If your knee really hurts, respect that and move to a more comfortable position.