

SITTING PRACTICE: WEEK 1 & 2

Week 1: Starting “The Practice”

I will often refer to meditation as The Practice. Honoring the importance of meditation in this way was handed down to me by my mentor. I now hand it down to you.

If you wish, the child/children can refer to meditation as The Sitting Pillow Practice or Pillow Time. Make it fun and identifiable to them.

Duration: 2 Minutes

Practice sitting on the pillow and breathing for two minutes each day. We are not seeking a defined experience. We are simply getting into the routine and practice of sitting on a pillow and relaxing. Nothing more, nothing less.

Instructions/Say the Following:

“Sit quietly on the pillow with legs crossed.”

“Close your eyes and notice how the air you breathe is going in and out.”

“Notice how relaxed you are starting to feel.”

**Ask the child/children if they are more comfortable with their back up against the wall. Put a soft blanket underneath the pillow for added comfort on the feet/ankles.*

Week 2: Building "The Practice"

Don't seek a defined experience – there is nothing to "get right" or "accomplish."

Expectations will only get in your way of letting the natural event of meditation take place. If you look for a defined experience, you will get frustrated, and this internal contraction will be a major barrier to your meditation practice.

Whatever happens during your session – sleep, mind wandering, thoughts racing, lightning bolt of insight, or deep relaxation – it is **exactly what is supposed to happen**. Always honor whatever experience you have. It is a gift.

This message is more for you, the adult. And it's important to practice, because children will sense your anxiety. For children six and under, we don't need to offer this explanation about expectations just yet, simply because they tend to not have expectations in general.

Breath is the anchor: All people who practice and teach meditation know the breath is the starting and finishing point for all types of meditation. We carry our breath with us in every moment; therefore, it becomes our anchor, helping us focus on the moment, rather than be distracted by our thoughts.

Children can learn this, too; simply noticing their breath, how their chest rises and falls, helps them be in the moment (or if they are younger, getting them to touch their chest/tummy to notice).

In that moment, your child is in their breath and nowhere else. If you do the same, then you are both anchored in that moment together.

Duration: 4 Minutes

Practice sitting on the pillow and breathing for four minutes each day. It is not necessary to sit for longer, our advancement is slow and steady.

Again, we are not seeking a defined experience. We are simply building a solid foundation, and sitting on a pillow and relaxing. Nothing more, nothing less.

Instructions/Say the Following:

"Sit quietly on the pillow with legs crossed."

"Close your eyes; notice and FEEL the air you breathe."

"Take three long, slow, deep breaths, filling your lower lungs first, then your chest. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in with full awareness of your breath and its life-giving air."

"Notice how relaxed you are starting to feel."