

Basic Walking Meditation

This description of walking meditation is based on instructions by [Yutaddhammo Bhikkhu](#).

To strengthen mindfulness, we need to practice - much like building strength by going to the gym. Without regular practice, mindfulness won't develop. Practice can be either formal or informal. **Walking meditation** is a formal mindfulness practice, like sitting meditation. Informal practice, on the other hand, involves bringing mindful awareness to daily activities - paying close attention to your senses, bodily sensations, or whatever you're doing in the moment. Walking meditation offers another way to cultivate and strengthen mindfulness, complementing sitting meditation.

Benefits of Walking Meditation

- Balances out sitting meditation, which can be painful or unhealthy if prolonged.
- After the practice ends, walking meditation **helps sustain mindfulness in daily activities** for longer, while the effects of breath meditation tend to fade more quickly. However, with regular practice, both walking and breath meditation equally enhance your overall (trait) mindfulness over time.
- Supports physical health: improves muscles, digestion, immune system, brain health, and cardiovascular well-being.
- Enhances body awareness through movement and interaction with the environment, generating a rich stream of sensations.
- Especially helpful for restlessness or anxiety, as walking releases energy, provides sensory stimulation, and uses rhythmic motion that calms the nervous system.
- Patience training: Walking meditation tends to both test our patience and train our patience - because we are so accustomed to walking faster.

1-Point Walking Meditation Instructions

1. Posture and Setup

- Choose a straight walking path, it can be from **7-20 feet long**.
- Stand at one end of the path with your hands gently placed, one over the other, either in front or behind your body.
- Soften your gaze toward the ground ahead.

2. Synchronize Steps with Breathing

- Walk at a speed that matches your natural breath.
- With each step, move about **1 foot forward**:
 - When stepping with the right foot, internally note "**stepping right**."
 - When stepping with the left foot, note "**stepping left**."
 - **Inhale** as you shift the weight into each leg, exhale at all other times.

3. Focus on Sensations

- The main object of meditation is the sensations and feelings generated by walking, similar to focusing on breath sensations in seated meditation.
- If helpful, you can also note mental processes, e.g., "thinking," "planning," or "worrying," as they arise.

4. Stopping and Turning

- At the end of the path:
 - Bring the back foot next to the front foot and note "**stopping**."
 - Pause, then note "**standing**."
- To turn around: Turn one foot at a time, pivoting on the heel, noting "**turning**", then pivot the other foot next to it, noting "**turning**", until both feet face the opposite direction.

5. Handling Distractions

- For significant distractions (e.g., strong thoughts or emotions, a flood of thoughts):
 - Stop walking, note "**stopping**," and optionally label the distraction with a light mental note.
 - Resume walking once the distraction fades.
- For minor distractions, no need to stop walking: gently return your attention to walking, just as you return to the breath in seated meditation.