

Setting up for Meditation

Use the acronym P-A-P-E-R to help you to set up well for meditation....

1. **Posture** – Start the meditation by checking your posture is comfortable and allows you to be relaxed and alert. 3 points of contact with the chair/floor. Check your back is upright with natural curves, and not strained/tense. Make sure your hands are supported so that your shoulders can relax.
2. **Awareness** – Use your weight to start becoming aware of your experience. Feel the weight of your body against the chair, notice the resistance of the chair and then the ‘rebound’ of energy back up your spine – with your back ‘rising up’.

Try to maintain a ‘BROAD AWARENESS’ throughout the mindfulness of breathing. Only **25% of your awareness** needs to be with the breath, **the other 75%** encompasses the rest of your experience - body, sounds, thoughts etc. Build up a **BROAD AWARENESS** of your experience, trying to notice physical sensations from different places in your body. Whilst maintaining awareness of the sensations in your body, broaden out further to include your ‘inner world’ – notice any thoughts arise and pass, notice the quality of your thoughts, what is your mental weather, your emotional state?

3. **Purpose** – after checking your posture and building up a Broad Awareness, we can begin to get a sense of how we need to work in this meditation. We can become clear about our **PURPOSE** for this meditation.

What is your inner world like? Are you anxious or restless, or agitated? Do you need to calm down? You can use the out-breath to relax and calm down. You can also bring your awareness lower down in the body, either below the navel or at the base of your body. If you need to calm down, perhaps try keeping around 50% your awareness down in your lower body.

Or are you sleepy and dull? Do you need to Brighten Up? If so, you can place a particular focus onto the inbreath - as you inhale, imagine you are being filled with light and energy. You can open your eyes if you are really sleepy. And you can place more of your awareness higher up in the body, in the chest or between the eyes.

4. **Enjoyment** – E is for Enjoyment and Emotional Engagement. For us to be less distracted during the meditation our mind has to want to do it. We need to reflect on the benefits of meditation. We need to look for pleasure and enjoyment in the meditation. Bring a sense of curiosity and enjoy the calming sensations of the breath.

5. **Resolve.** R is for Resolve – We need to start off each meditation having made a strong intention and resolve to commit to the meditation practice. Have a sense of pride and try to do a good job of staying with the sensations of the breath and getting up to 10 without being distracted. You can remind yourself of your purpose and re-establish your resolve at each bell.

Don’t confuse this with making too ‘forced’ or ‘strained’ an effort to follow the breath (or trying to have too ‘narrow’ an awareness focussing only on the breath – remember 25%/75%).

So R can also be a reminder to **RELAX**. The more relaxed we can become, the more likely we are to keep a broad awareness, find pleasure in the meditation and become absorbed in the experience of breathing.