

Sitting Postures

Sitting postures can aid your development of awareness in mindfulness training. Their purpose is three-fold:

1. Provide a stable position and feeling in your body so you can focus on the object of attention during an exercise, such as breathing.
2. Promote remaining still and alert during your practice, which can help achieve a state of mental clarity. Settling your body into a position of stillness can give rise to a corresponding state of mental settling.
3. Develop the ability to sit for an extended period without yielding to muscular tension, pain, drowsiness, or falling asleep.

Most postures require some degree of flexibility in your legs, which not everyone can do. When selecting a position, choose one that allows you to sit the longest without pain and moving. You may experiment with different postures as your practice grows.

1



- Touch both knees on the floor.
- Cross your legs at the calves.
- Rest your left foot on the right thigh.
- Rest your right foot on the left thigh.
- Turn both soles of your feet upward.

2



- Touch both knees on the floor.
- Lie one leg flat on the floor from your knee to your foot so that your foot touches the inner thigh of the opposite leg and turn the sole of the foot upward.
- Bend the other leg in, lift the foot up and place it on the opposite thigh, and turn the sole of the foot upward.

3



- Touch both knees on the floor.
- Lie both legs flat on the floor from your knee to your foot and parallel with one in front of the other.

4



- Touch both knees on the floor.
- Fold both legs underneath your thighs in a slight "V" while resting your buttocks on a bench or on your heels.
- Touch your big toes.
- Place the tops of your feet flat on the floor.

5



- Touch both knees on the floor.
- Fold both legs underneath your thighs while resting your buttocks on a cushion.
- Place the tops of your feet flat on the floor.
- Sit close to the front edge of the cushion.
- Choose a firm enough cushion so that it is at least three inches thick when compressed.

6



- Use a chair that has a level seat, straight back, and no arms.
- Sit so that your back does not lean against the back of the chair.
- Place your legs side by side and your feet flat on the floor.

In all these postures:

- Cup your hands—right on the left—with the tips of your thumbs touching, and rest your hands just below your navel with the bend of each wrist resting against the thigh and your palms turned upward. Alternatively, you may rest your hands on your thighs with palms facing down or up.
- Relax your shoulders and arms.
- Sit upright, keeping your back straight and spine erect.
- Allow your body to hang naturally.
- Relax your diaphragm and expand your belly fully.
- Keep your chin up with your head level, looking forward.
- Rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth, just behind your front teeth.
- Keep your eyes closed or open. If you keep your eyes open, then fix them looking straight in front of you. You are not looking at anything in particular so that you can forget about vision.
- Focus on your breathing as you keep your other body parts still.

References

Gallo, F. J. (2016). *A practitioner's guide to using the acceptance and commitment therapy matrix model*. Frank J. Gallo.

Gunaratana, B. (2011). *Mindfulness in plain English*. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.

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