WORKSHEET 42 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Breath meditation

Coming back to the breath, again and again (mindfulness)

AIM

Offer the basic mindfulness practice: observing the breath without changing it and kindly coming back each time the mind gets distracted.

WHO IT IS FOR

Anyone starting out with mindfulness; rumination, anxiety. Adults and adolescents.

DURATION

5-15 min a day

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Distinguish this exercise from slow breathing (worksheet 15): here the breath is not changed, it is observed.
2. Guide attention to where the breath is most noticeable (nostrils, chest or abdomen).
3. Explain that the mind will wander dozens of times: each return to the breath is the practice itself.
4. Start with 5 minutes and lengthen gradually.
5. At follow-up, explore how the person treats themselves when they get lost (criticism or kindness).

POINTS TO WATCH

> For some people, attending to the breath increases anxiety (panic, trauma): offer sounds, feet on the floor or the hands as an anchor instead.

REFERENCES

Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G. & Teasdale, J. D. (2013). Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression (2nd ed.). Guilford.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness. Delacorte.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

© 2026 Gonzalo Garzo, clinical psychologist · gonzalogarzo.com · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: free to share, no commercial use or modifications

WORKSHEET 42 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Breath meditation

Here you are not trying to breathe differently: you observe your breath as it is. Your mind will often wander; coming back to the breath is the exercise.

1. Sit comfortably, with your back straight but not rigid.
2. Find where you notice your breath best: nostrils, chest or abdomen.
3. Observe the in-breath, the out-breath, the small pauses.
4. When you notice your mind has wandered, say “thinking” and gently come back to the breath.

Day	Duration	How many times I drifted off (roughly)	How I treated myself

What do I discover about my mind by watching it work?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

© 2026 Gonzalo Garzo, clinical psychologist · gonzalogarzo.com · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: free to share, no commercial use or modifications