

# Vipassana Guidelines

Whatever the sitting posture, it should be comfortable and fulfill three conditions – an energised spine with its natural curvature, the rest of the body relaxed and the head poised on top. The hands are placed on the lap and the eyes gently closed.

Then the attention is fixed on the process of breathing – just the normal and natural breath. It is the sensations at the abdomen caused by breathing which are to be observed. And a noting word is used to focus the thinking mind onto these sensations. As the abdomen rises, the word ‘rising’ is repeated. As it falls, ‘falling’. And in the gap before the in-breath begins again, some contact in the body is felt and observed, using the noting word ‘touching’.

Feeling the sensations of the abdomen as neutral and pleasant, the heart is calmed and the mind is stilled. Then the beginning and end of each in-breath and out-breath are more clearly seen.

When the attention becomes somewhat steady, let it experience whatever draws it within the field of awareness — sensations and feelings, moods and emotions, mental images and thoughts. Using a simple noting word to note and without any interference whatsoever, all these passing phenomena are to be intimately felt and carefully observed. Should the mind wander, let it be brought back gently but firmly to observe sensations at the abdomen in order to cultivate a sharp attentiveness.

In this way, right awareness with intuitive intelligence (*Satipaṇṇā*) becomes established.

**This bare attentiveness** — simply watching all that arises and passes away;

**This choiceless awareness** — that does not control or manipulate;

**This impartial observation** — that does not judge or question;

**This intuitive introspection** — fully experiencing each physical, emotional and mental event as it really is, leads to the direct realisation that everything is impermanent and insubstantial and that to identify with or to become attached to anything whatsoever will bring dissatisfaction.

These Vipassana Insights into the Three Characteristics of Existence; impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self, lead to the complete liberation from all suffering, the experience of the unborn, the unbecome, the uncreated, the unconditioned; refuge, harbour and home; perfect contentment and peace.

“Moment to moment awareness is the secret of success.”

— The Mahasi Sayadaw.