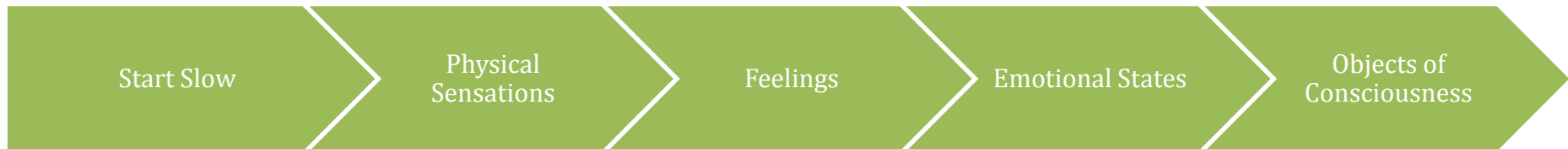


Walking Meditation

Meditation in Action

Meditation is a process of developing increased awareness in order to raise our consciousness, feel more deeply fulfilled, and achieve an increased understanding of life. If you are a beginner to meditation, a walking meditation may be a good introduction, as it is generally easier to become aware of your body while it is in motion (as opposed to while sitting). The main focus during a walking meditation is the experience of walking. Unlike regular sitting meditation, your eyes are open and you do not withdraw your attention from the outside world. The following path illustrates the sequence of meditation practice from starting slow to narrowing your awareness to objects of your consciousness.



- **Start slow** – The point of walking meditation is not to change the way we walk, so concentrate on walking at a slow, but normal pace. You may find it easier to start with a guided meditation before making the practice your own. Check out the resources below to find a guided meditation that meets your needs.
- **Physical sensations** – First become aware of those body parts that are in contact with the ground, namely the feet, first while standing then during walking. Then lead your awareness throughout the body, consciously allowing each body part to become relaxed. *Experience* body sensations, rather than thinking about them.
- **Feelings** – Feelings often stand between sensations and emotions (e.g., does a really bad smell ever make you feel angry?). During a walking meditation, feelings associated with sensations, such as the body and the things we hear, smell, and see, will arise. The goal is to notice these feelings without clinging to them.
- **Mental and emotional states** – Become aware of the emotions you feel throughout your walk. They may change rapidly throughout the experience. When our minds are very busy, we become disconnected from our current experience. Continued practice becoming aware of your current emotional and mental states can help you calm your mind and stay in the moment.
- **Objects of consciousness** – At this stage, you will be able to not only be aware of your mental and emotional states, but are able to be aware of their specific contents and to categorize thoughts and emotions in various ways.

The following are some great resources to help you get started with your guided meditation (click on resource to link directly to its webpage):

Wildmind

- Offers instructions on walking meditation, blogs, and meditation music, DVDs, and books.

Meditation Oasis

- Offers instructions on meditation, guided podcasts, smartphone apps, and a pregnancy meditation podcast.

Peace is Every Step

- Provides simple exercises to increase awareness of our own body and mind through conscious breathing.

Meditation Music

- Provides instructions as well as free mp3 downloads.

Walking Meditation Quick Facts:

- Walking meditation is best done outdoors.
- Try to set aside at least 20 minutes to your walking meditation.
- Build awareness while standing still before you start walking.
- Acknowledge any tension that builds in your body during the meditation, then let it go.

