

## Mindfulness of the body while doing sitting meditation

Sitting properly makes a huge difference to meditation practice. Follow these guidelines and check in with an experienced practitioner. Some positions can be tiring at first, so you may need to keep trying to loosen up the joints and tendons, but never take up a position which creates pain or undue strain. A good sitting position allows you to be both alert and relaxed.

- **Sitting position;** the aim is to create a stable base, so that you are solidly supported by the ground. There are three options: first sitting cross-legged or in full or half lotus, the knees should ideally be supported on the ground; kneeling; or sitting in a chair. You can see how to set up these positions in the video.
- **Back;** the key is to keep the spine straight. So you ease upwards, checking the position of the **head and neck**, which should be level. However, don't strain, the head should just feel naturally balanced.
- **Shoulders, arms and hands;** position the hands on the lap (you can also use the condition if sitting cross-legged, to support the hands), or your knees or legs, either palm down or palm up. The aim should be to create stability and keep the shoulders relaxed.
- **Eyes;** different traditions suggest closing the eyes or keeping them open, or half open. If the eyes are closed you can get sleepy, so then open them in an unfocused way. Generally you look straight ahead even with the eyes closed, but if your eyes are open and you're getting distracted, you can allow the gaze to be towards the floor.
- **Mouth;** make sure the mouth and jaw are relaxed, and ideally the tongue will gently be touching the upper palate.
- **Breathing;** this is the final area for attention, and you can follow many other videos and guidance about this. For general sitting practice, you simply bring your attention to what the body is naturally doing, rather than changing the breath.