

Introduction to Meditation & Mindfulness Basic Elements of Posture

You can practice sitting meditation on the floor or in a chair. Having an “alert spine” is key to your meditation posture. Sit in a way that your posture expresses awareness. It’s very helpful to gradually train yourself to sit upright, both in the chair and on the floor.

a. Elevated & Forward Tilting Pelvis

When sitting on the floor it is helpful to elevate your pelvis off the floor on some form of cushion. Sit on the front third of the cushion so that your pelvis is tilting forward. This orientation will help you lower your knees and maintain the neutral curve of your low back. If your hips are really tight, try elevating your pelvis higher. You can get two cushions or build up a whole throne, in order to get your knees down. You are forming a tripod of the three points, your knees and your butt, like the broad base of a mountain supporting you.

If you’re sitting on a chair, both feet flat are on the ground parallel to each other, so both the soles of the feet are firmly planted on the ground or a cushion if you need the support. Your knees should be lower than your hips. You may need a folded blanket or towel under your sit bones to help tilt your pelvis forward.

b. Support

If you need to use a back rest, try using a pillow really low so your low back is supported and the upper back is free. Of course adjust your position if you have physical conditions requiring more support or even lying down.

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c. Relaxed Shoulders & Open Hands

You can roll your shoulders up, back and down a few times. Notice the orientation of your arms. Try to have the elbows hanging below your shoulders and relax your hands. The classic Buddhist meditation posture for hands is together in front of you just below the belly button, floating, not resting on anything, but floating, with the thumb tips touching lightly. You can also simply rest your hands on your thighs. You can also use a cushion or a blanket on your lap to support your hands.

d. Head

Avoid the tendency to let your head drift forward or tilt to the side. Think about lining up your ears with your shoulders.

e. Eyes

You can meditate with your eyes open or closed. Often when people are really sleepy it's helpful to meditate with their eyes open. Closing your eyes might help to eliminate distraction.

f. Mouth

Relax your mouth. Release your tongue - let it rest in the cup of your lower jaw.

Finding Your Seat

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It's helpful to check in with these points of posture as you begin meditating. By checking in you affirm your resolve to pay attention.

- A. Gentle movement to open the hips & extend the spine.
- B. Elevating the pelvis and tipping it forward on the floor or in the chair.
- C. Extend the spine by stacking the ribs over the pelvis
- D. Find the support you need for your back, hips and arms
- E. Relax your shoulders, arms & hands
- F. Place hands in your lap in “mudra” or on your thighs
- G. Ramp your head up & back
- H. Relax and/or close your eyes
- I. Relax your mouth & release your tongue