

Guided nature contemplation: delivery instructions

Thank you for participating in our study. We appreciate your willingness to explore this nature contemplation practice with us.

General Guidelines

Complete this exercise five times per week over the next two weeks, totaling ten sessions. Advance planning is essential for optimal effectiveness. Allocate sufficient time for each session, as the intervention's efficacy diminishes when hastily inserted between other commitments. Consider rescheduling conflicting appointments if necessary. This exercise represents a deliberate investment in your well-being and requires dedicated time allocation.

Each session should last approximately 30 minutes. However, account for additional travel time required to reach a natural environment or park setting.

The intervention must be conducted individually and in silence. Turn off your mobile phone or leave it at home. While this may initially feel uncomfortable, participants typically find this digital disconnection increasingly pleasant throughout the intervention period.

Select your location in advance. Suitable environments include forests, parks, or pastoral areas. Choose locations that are relatively quiet and offer minimal disturbance from human activity.

Exercise Protocol

Begin with approximately 10 minutes of mindful walking. Walk with deliberate attention to your surroundings, noting sensory experiences including visual elements such as colors and light patterns, auditory stimuli such as wind sounds, and tactile sensations including sunlight or wind on your face and body.

Subsequently, select a location for approximately 10 minutes of seated practice. Suitable locations include park benches, fallen logs, or grassy areas. If comfortable, consider moving slightly off established pathways to locations near water or deeper into wooded areas.

The core practice involves sitting quietly and allowing your environment to affect you naturally. This is not an analytical observation exercise requiring naming or categorizing perceived elements. Instead, maintain an open and receptive presence. No specific achievement is required during this period—the focus is purely on present-moment awareness and experiential engagement.

After approximately 10 minutes, stand calmly and begin your return walk. Allow the experience to continue processing internally during the return journey.

Upon returning home, briefly document your experience in a journal.

Key Considerations

Review these instructions regularly throughout the intervention period to maintain focus on the primary objectives.

Expect mental wandering during the exercise. You will likely notice your thoughts drifting to other topics or engaging in analytical thinking. This is entirely normal human psychological functioning, particularly for individuals with demanding schedules or elevated stress levels. Simply acknowledge this mental activity, respond with gentle amusement, and redirect attention to your environment and natural surroundings.

Participants may also experience restlessness or tension during the exercise, or encounter emotions such as sadness, uncertainty, or anger. Allow these emotional responses to emerge and acknowledge their presence. Repetitive labeling can be helpful—for example, silently noting "restlessness...restlessness...restlessness" or "sadness...sadness...sadness." These emotional responses actually indicate the intervention's effectiveness. The exercise facilitates disengagement from daily life routines, and the resulting silence and tranquility can create space for previously suppressed emotional material to surface. Permitting this process is psychologically healthy. Maintain your seated position despite discomfort. These experiences typically diminish over time, creating space for alternative experiences to emerge.

Recognize that daily experiences will vary in intensity and quality. Some sessions may feel less eventful than others. This variation is acceptable and expected. Maintain curiosity and openness to whatever emerges or fails to emerge during each session.

Practical Considerations

Inclement weather may make 10-minute seated periods challenging. In such conditions, consider shorter periods of mindful standing at pleasant locations. Bring an umbrella when appropriate.

Returning to the same location repeatedly is acceptable, though location variation is also suitable. Choose based on personal preference while consistently prioritizing quiet and peaceful environments. Maintain adherence to the three-phase structure: walking, seated practice, walking.

Consider limiting discussion of the intervention during the two-week period. External responses may not support your process. Allowing experiences to develop without extensive verbalization can be beneficial, preventing analytical overthinking or development of specific achievement expectations.

Audio-Guided Meditation Script

Phase 1: Grounding

Take time to become present in your current location.

Find a comfortable posture—as relaxed as possible while maintaining an upright position. Place your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands on your thighs.

Direct your attention to your feet and notice how they make contact with the ground.

[5 SECONDS]

Shift your attention to your hands. Notice how they make contact with your legs.

[5 SECONDS]

Now bring your attention to your body overall. Perhaps there is a body region where you feel some tension. Notice what you experience in that area without judgment. See if you can release any tension you find. You might silently repeat "relax, relax" or "let go, let go."

[15 SECONDS]

Phase 2: Environmental Awareness

I now invite you to direct your attention to your environment.

Look around you.

Notice what you see. The colors. The shapes.

Try not to label or name what you see. Simply maintain attention to shapes and colors.

[30 SECONDS]

You may sometimes notice that you become absent—that your thoughts have drifted elsewhere. You can acknowledge this as "thinking." There is thinking. Smile at this recognition. This is completely human. Then gently return your attention to your environment.

Observe the nature around you: trees, shrubs, flowers, plants, water—whatever is present in your environment. Allow this environment and its atmosphere to affect you.

Experience.

Simply be consciously present: still and alert.

[60 SECONDS]

Phase 3: Focused Natural Element

I invite you to give your attention to one aspect of nature.

For example, a specific tree, plant, or flower.

Observe it for a while.

[20 SECONDS]

Notice how it is simply present. Vital. Still.

In this way, it might serve as an example, a teacher.

A way of being in the world: still, vital, present.

Without thinking, without problems and complications.

It is an expression of a universal, transcendent force.

Just as you are.

[30 SECONDS]

You may experience restlessness during the exercise, or emotions may arise. Try to remain seated. Give space to the restlessness or emotion. You might label it, such as "restlessness, restlessness...restlessness" or "sadness...sadness...sadness" until you notice it diminishing and you are able to continue with the exercise.

Continue observing the tree, plant, or flower.

Experience the shared, still, vital presence.

[60 SECONDS]

Phase 4: Witnessing Consciousness

After sitting this way for some time, I invite you finally to pause and consider yourself as observer. You can notice that you observe and that you are consciously present.

But who is it that notices that you observe and that you are consciously present?

[10 SECONDS]

Essentially, you are witnessing consciousness. This is the timeless dimension within yourself. It is without form. In essence, you are still, present, witnessing consciousness.

You are not your emotions, your thoughts, your body. You are not your possessions, your achievements, the stories in your head. These are forms that come and go. When you identify with these forms, there is never rest—there is always something to worry about, because everything changes.

Essentially, you are a field of spatial consciousness. This is enduring and indestructible.

Nature can help you experience this.

The more you connect with the formless and timeless dimension within yourself, the more often you are present in the now—alert and conscious—the more inspiration, connection, love, and inner peace you will experience.

[30 SECONDS]

You may now conclude the exercise. But you may also remain seated a while longer if you find this pleasant.