

Recollective awareness meditation

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These basic meditation instructions are for people who are new to meditation. If you already have a meditation practice, you can try these instructions or you can meditate in the ways you are accustomed.

- Find a quiet spot to meditate where you most likely won't be disturbed by others, or by the phone. Decide how long you are going to sit for (anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes) and either set an alarm or have a clock nearby to peek at on occasion.
- Sit in a comfortable posture, one that you feel you will not change for the duration of the session, either on a chair, couch or on a meditation cushion or stool. If you do need to move during the meditation session, try to move slowly and quietly into a more comfortable posture.
- Close your eyes and bring your attention to the touch of your hands resting one on top of the other in your lap. Don't hold your attention there. Instead, allow your mind to go where it will. If you are drawn into thoughts, feelings, memories or fantasies, let your attention go there. Your attention may at times also be drawn to sounds, bodily sensations, fragrances or odours, or your breath.
- When you feel that you have been away from the contact of your hands for several minutes, you can remind yourself to come back to the hands and stay there for a few seconds before allowing your mind to wander again.
- If you feel restless, bored, confused, discouraged, elated, sleepy, upset, anything, that's fine. You don't *have* to do anything about it, though if you wish you can bring your attention back to the touch of your hands. If you do, stay with your hands for a little while and if your mind wants to go back into the feelings or thoughts you left, let it. If something else draws your attention, that's also fine.
- When your time for meditation is up, take a couple of minutes to mentally recall what you can of the sitting. If you would like to journal your meditation sitting, try to write a description of what you remember.

Instructions for journaling

- Before writing down the sitting, write down the date and time that the sitting took place. This is helpful when referring back to the journal entry.
- There are two basic ways to begin writing it down: list or narrative. If you decide to make a list of the events you recall from the sitting, use longer descriptions than single words. It's not necessary to write down the sitting in chronological order. Start with what you remember most easily and once you have that on paper, write down the other things that start to come to mind from the meditation. If you like to have journal entries in chronological order, you can always rewrite the entry afterwards, putting it in order, or mark entries in some way to give a picture of when they occurred.
- Your descriptions don't have to be exact, just truthful. If a description doesn't feel accurate, that's fine so long as you are being honest. There's no need to hold ourselves to a high standard of precision in this endeavour.
- Try to keep your journal entries focused on what went on during the meditation. In the course of writing things down, you might have some thoughts about an experience. If you wish, write down your afterthoughts but mark them in a way that shows they did not occur during the sitting (perhaps by putting them in parentheses).
- You will only remember a fraction of what goes on in many of your sittings. This is perfectly normal. Just write down what you can recollect. That is enough. Some journal entries may be many paragraphs long, while others may just have a couple of sentences.

The U.S. recollective awareness teacher Linda Modaro will be visiting NZ in November 2016, running workshops in both the North and South Islands. For more information on these events go to: <http://abet.nz/linda-modaro-2016>.

