



CALM ABIDING MEDITATION

Taking Breath and Natural Mind as Support

1. First, **take refuge** in the Three Jewels and **generate great love and compassion** for all beings. This is the first of the Three Excellences—“excellent in the beginning.”
2. Now refresh your body and mind with **3 cleansing breaths**: on the out-breath release the stale airs, then simply relax into a natural breathing cycle.
3. Settle the body in **easy, natural posture**: spine erect and flexible; head and neck relaxed, like a flower on its stem; legs in a position that allows you to be both stable and relaxed; arms and hands resting lightly on thighs or hands resting lightly together, unclasped; eyes half-open, gazing softly into the space in front; mouth relaxed, tongue on upper palate.

These two **preparation practices** are important to the clarity, ease, and stability of meditation; it is wise to include them in all your practices.

4. The meditation continues to **flow with the breath**: breathing in and out, naturally and easily, attention lightly on the out-breath—as light as a feather touching a bubble.

Between the end of one out-breath and the beginning of a new in-breath, **relax—resting in the open space between breaths**.

When a thought, emotion, memory, or image arises, as soon as you become aware of it, **simply relax**. As it dissolves, **rest lightly in the openness** between that thought and the next one—**allowing the mind simply to settle in its natural state**, maintaining an easy, relaxed awareness of everything within and all around.

5. Continue in this way for the time you have set aside for your meditation. When first beginning this practice you may find it helpful to divide your session into short periods of 5-10 minutes each, **resting in the openness** between them.

6. There is no “point” to this meditation. There is just the practice: breathe, observe, relax. **Rest in the open space. Relax, just be.** Calmly abide.

Meditation is the second of the Three Excellences—“excellent in the middle”—meditating with no fixation to the illusory solidity of appearance or experience.

7. Let the transitions between meditating and not-meditating be soft, gentle, gradual, both in beginning and in ending. As you close your meditation, look up, gaze softly around, move your body gently...and softly, gradually, quietly resume your normal attention...still relaxed in natural awareness.

8. We end by **dedicating the merit** of our practice and reciting prayers of aspiration and auspiciousness, including supplications to our lamas to remain for a long time in the world with us. This is the third of the Three Excellences—“excellent at the end”—dedicating to the enlightenment of all the merit of our virtuous activities.