

Five Things to do at the Beginning and End of a Meditation

- Ayya Khema's suggestions: Aligned with Right Intention and Right Effort from the Noble Eightfold Path.

Five things to do at the beginning of a meditation

1. Gratitude

- a. To your teacher/teachers/monks/nuns/lay practitioners.
- b. All those who have kept the teachings of the Buddha alive and well.

2. Motivation

- a. Why do you sit? What is your motivation for your spiritual practice?
- b. Your motivation needs to be something inspiring, long lasting and far reaching spanning a minimum of 3-5 years. This is not something that changes daily.
- c. Examples range from: I sit for peace of mind. I sit to master the five hindrances and their antidotes. I sit to alleviate suffering, mine and others. I sit to uproot suffering and its causes. I sit to uproot craving. I sit to uproot greed, hatred and delusion.

3. Determination

- a. Determine your intention for your sit. Be specific.
- b. The general formula is to pick a method that generates concentration, i.e. ana pana sati (mindfulness of breathing), sweeping, or metta for the first 2/3rds of the period followed by an insight practice for the last third.
- c. Here are several examples of determinations.
 - i. Anapana followed by insight practice of noticing arising and ceasing of sound.
 - ii. Sweeping meditation followed by noticing arising and ceasing of sensation.
 - iii. Loving-kindness meditation for the entire period.

4. Metta

- a. Send loving kindness to a few people. Note, if you determine metta as your primary practice for the period then reverse 4 and 5.

5. Gatha

- a. Breathing in I calm mind and body, breathing out, I smile.

See page 2 for things to do at the end of a meditation

Five things to do at the end of a meditation

1. Recapitulate

- a. Review internal and external factors that led to either a restless, distracted or calm and concentrated sit. Delete what led to restlessness, a mind filled with hindrances (such as checking texts and emails prior to sitting).
- b. Repeat what supports calm and concentration, (such as being off all electronic media including television by 8 pm).

2. Insights

- a. Review insights. Small, medium or large.
- b. Keep a meditation log. Note date, length of sit, a few descriptive words describing your meditation, and discoveries from your recapitulation. Designate one section of the log to record insights. Review them regularly

3. Impermanence

- a. Remind yourself that all conditioned states are impermanent.

4. Merit

- a. Dedication. Dedicate any wholesomeness generated by your practice, now or at some other time to all sentient beings, or to a few specific individuals or situations happening in the world. This acknowledges the interdependent web of life. Each one of us sowing wholesome seeds, diminishing the forces of greed, hatred and delusion, benefits, everyone, the whole.

5. Mindfulness

- a. Intend to be mindful.