



A Mindful Walk Outdoors



1. As you begin, walk at a natural pace. Place your hands wherever comfortable: on your belly, behind your back or at your sides. Whether you are starting down your own trail or simply envisioning your walk on a trail like the one pictured here:

- If you find it useful, you can count steps up to 10, and then start back at one again.
- With each step, pay attention to the lifting and falling of your foot. Notice any shifting of your body from side to side.
- Should something else capture your attention, come back to the sensation of walking. Your mind will wander, so without frustration, gently guide it back again as many times as you need.
- Maintain a larger sense of the environment around you, taking it all in, staying safe and aware.

2. Now for a few minutes, expand your attention to sounds. Whether you're indoors, in the woods or in a city, pay attention to sounds you hear without labeling or naming, or getting caught up in whether you find them pleasant or unpleasant. Notice sounds as nothing more or less than sound.

3. Shift your awareness to your sense of smell. Again, simply notice. Don't push or force yourself to feel anything at all, just bring attention to the sense of smell, whatever you discover. Pay attention to the smells around you without labeling or naming or getting caught up in whether you find them pleasant or unpleasant.

4. Now, move to vision: Notice colors and objects and whatever else you see. Patiently coming back each time something grabs your attention, or even if something needs addressing, such as avoiding an obstacle. Stay natural, not overly rigid, not daydreaming and drifting, but with sustained awareness. Take it all in.

5. Keep this open awareness of everything around you, wherever you are. Nothing to do, nothing to fix, nothing to change. Be fully aware as you walk. Use all your senses to experience this moment in time as you continue down your path.

6. In the last moments of your mindful walk, come back to awareness of the physical sensations of walking, wherever else your mind found itself throughout the practice. Notice your feet again touching the ground. Notice again the movements in your body with each step. Continue using your senses to observe your surroundings until your walk concludes.

When you're ready to end your walking meditation, stand still for a moment. Pausing, choose a moment to end the practice. As you finish, consider how you might bring this kind of awareness into the rest of your day.