

Find Your Stride...

A Mindful guide to walking meditation

The intention of walking is to ***slow things down, quiet the mind*** and ***come back to the present moment***. The practice of “slowing things” down is the foundation to all mastery, whether it is in sports, reading, cooking, relationships, stress reduction or being more precise in your work. Walking meditation helps integrate focused mind with movement.

I have arrived
I am home
In the here
In the now
I am Solid
I am Free
In the Ultimate
I dwell
--Thich Nhat Hanh

When: Best to walk in the **morning or evening**, where the air is the cleanest and mind not as active. The middle of the day is when your mind is most active.

Place: Best to be outdoors in a garden with your shoes off. If you are walking indoors you can circle around a room. You can slow walk anywhere - even walking down the hall. Do it in a way that you are **formless** – others don’t notice you are practicing. For very slow walking, it is best to be alone or in a group of slow walkers.

Posture: As you walk – have your back straight, shoulders back, half smile on your beautiful face, head tilted forward slightly with your eyes directed straight ahead. **“Walk like a Tiger”**

Pace: Start at normal pace counting your breath as you step (3 steps per inhalation, 3 steps per exhalation) for 10 minutes. Slow your pace to 1 step for inhalation / 1 step for exhalation for 5 minutes. Slow your pace even more ½ step for inhalation (heel), ½ step for exhalation (ball). After 20 minutes of slow walking, Stop. Breathe in and out for a minute. Switch to more normal pace with focus still on your breath.

Breathe: Breathe through the nose on both inhalation and exhalation

Obstacles: All obstacles are created by your EGO - fear, doubt, peer pressure; “Let them go and let it flow”

Key Word Combos: If you want to progress past counting your breath, try these word combinations: Here / Now; Arrived / Home; Grateful / Graceful; Yes / Love; Harmony / Divinity; Intend / Attend; If you have identified your breathing rhythm (3 in 3 out), you can use phrases such as “Lotus flower blooms”

Other Resources: Zen Walking / Kinhin; The Long Road Turns to Joy (Thich Nhat Hanh); Arriving at your own door (Jon Kabat-Zinn)