

Meditation Instruction, Lincoln Zen Center

Time

- Early morning before getting busy, midday and/or early evening when not too tired and sleepy
- Empty stomach or at least one hour after eating
- **Schedule** the same time every day, at least five days a week (make it a must-do)
- Start by 15 minutes per sitting, two times a day and work up in 5-minute increment per week/month

Space

- A dedicated space
- Clean/uncluttered and fairly quiet in sound and sight
- Dimly lit (not in the dark)
- Good air circulation
- Leave your cushion or chair in the space as a reminder

Seven-Point Meditation Posture

1. Sit down & rock sideways and front/back to be centered;

Six Ways to Sit for Meditation

- The Quarter Lotus
 - The Half Lotus
 - The Full Lotus
 - The Burmese Position
 - Seiza (kneeling)
 - Chair
2. Elongate the Spine
 3. Resting Your Hands (cosmic mudra: left hand on top of right hand with thumbs slightly touching)
 4. Relaxing the Shoulders
 5. Tucking in the Chin
 6. Opening the Jaw
 7. Resting the Gaze (eyes slightly open gazing toward the floor)

Breath

- A few deep breaths at the beginning to let go of the burdens in your body and mind; breathe in from the nose and out through the mouth
- During meditation breathe In and out through the nose; quiet breathing
- Natural rhythm to and from the abdomen, no controlling the breaths

Mind

- Let thoughts, emotions, sensations, etc. come and go like watching the clouds in the sky; notice how they form and dissolve in the nature of impermanence.
- **Whenever your mind becomes scattered, use your breath as the means to take hold of your mind again.**

This is really simple practice; we do nothing but sit in the zazen posture breathing easily, keeping the eyes open, staying awake and letting go. That's all we do in zazen. We do nothing else.

~Shohaku Okumura

Zazen means to stop running after and to stop running away.

~Taisen Deshimaru