

THE 7 LINE SETTING UP EXERCISE

INTRODUCTION

The source of this teaching is *Satipatthana*, the way of mindfulness originally taught by Buddha. *Mindfulness* means the cultivation of peace and compassion. It means responsible freedom.

The entire dharma teaching is about mindfulness.

The exercises taught by our network are based on long association with practice, retreat and our lineage of teachers. Our own teachings are often adapted from traditional teachings. Mindfulness is deeply creative as well as ordered. It is said to require cultivation that develops out of previous experience and emerges out of previous understandings.

The *Setting Up* practice is a foundation exercise used to support and orient the main effort which is, of course, the daily act of living our lives together.

It is said that *mindfulness* is always lacking. There is always a need for maintenance, cultivation and renewal, so it is a lifelong undertaking.

It follows that this meaning of *mindfulness* be understood as meaningful, responsible freedom that people everywhere seek to realise.

SEVEN ASPECTS

1) CONTEXT.....supporting the present enlightenment for self and others: a safe, thriving, fair and just way of life. Both aspiration and determination are involved.

2) RESPECT.....due consideration to context; to guiding principles, aspirations and, also, challenges. Express your respect with gesture and appropriate words at the outset of any exercise session.

3) POSTURE.....becoming familiar with the integrity of body/mind, posture as embodied experience.
Attention is grounded in sensation and feeling on the physical plane. This allows emotion and thought to become more clearly apparent and insight less prone to confusion.

4) SCAN AND CALM.....head, trunk and lower body with a caring, attentive, willing and nonjudgmental interest. Posture becomes poised but relaxed.

5) WHOLE BODY; BARE ATTENTION.....establish and maintain awareness of the whole body, even while noticing particular formations, including the breath.
'Bare Attention' is undistracted, unstrained and open. *Mindfulness* pure and simple.

6) BREATH.....just notice; allow to flow; keep whole body awareness as well. A strong Bare Attention is required, so proceed gradually, without strain.

7) DEDICATION....affirming with gesture and words the necessity of future practice. With goodwill and good intent, make a determination to support the present enlightenment. *Mindfulness*, in its' very nature, requires cultivation and practice.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

1) CONTEXT: The teaching is always in support of peacefulness and the common good. *Mindfulness* is the calm and insightfulness that enables this purpose; it is not just an abstract attentiveness. Also, practice has to become suitable to the context of one's life and those we associate with as part of that.

2) RESPECT: The expression of integrity, recognition, intent and thoughtfulness to the context of practice: good will and good intent; recognition and acceptance; appreciation, gratitude.

Respect to the challenges and opportunities, the obstacles and supports. Respect to aspirations, questions and principles we live by.

Gratitude to friends and family, the community of peace. One's own words and gestures matter.

Find an appropriate gesture such as hands together over the heart.

3) POSTURE: We are whole people. Mind and body are integrated; experience involves the whole person and one can directly see that in the body.

Habitual outlook and general feeling are reflected in posture. When posture is cared for and set up with mindfulness, it becomes more resilient, relaxed and revealing. Breathing and circulation become less impeded. Awareness is less restricted; health is better supported.

4) SCAN AND CALM: Starting with the head and then including trunk and lower body, become more familiar with the bodily formations and patterns of reaction. One learns to calm reactive sensation and feeling within the body so it becomes less reactive and more responsive. The effect of emotion and thought becomes clearer.

The presence of mindfulness, once better established through practice, is stronger than habitual reaction, more aware and adaptable. It enhances meaningful survival.

5) WHOLE BODY: BARE ATTENTION

Awareness is pervasive, throughout the whole body. Even though one notices different sensations and feelings, one is less distracted by them and able to keep the thread of awareness on the whole body at the same time.

'*Bare Attention*' is undisturbed and steady, able to maintain itself even though emotions and ideas do arise. In brief, one becomes less reactive and more responsive.

6) BREATH

When Bare Attention is well established, one can also follow the breath. This can deepen bare attention and help one get a better grip when distracting forces are present. At first one has only a general awareness of breathing but this can become more absorbed and detailed. Because of *Bare Attention*, all the bodily patterns remain open to awareness and investigation.

7) DEDICATION: goodwill and good intent; future practice, future life; hands for peace; alone and all together; safe, thriving, fair and just.

Find a gesture to represent dedication, perhaps upturned, offering hands.

Always words, ideas and sincerity matter, whether your own or the shared words and actions of others.