

Stop & Smell the Roses.

{Guided Meditation on Sensations} by Michelle Margaret

Physical sensations can serve as a wonderful anchor to keep us present during meditation.

Here's how to do a simple meditation on sensations:

- Get into a meditative position.
- Relax your body with each exhale, feeling your weight pressing down into the earth.
- Feel where your body touches the ground, through the pelvis, legs and feet (and hands and head if you are lying down).
- Bring awareness to the sensations on your skin: the fabric of your clothing, the coolness or warmth of the air, the surface on which you sit or lie.
- Next, notice the sounds around you: first the closest one, the soft sound of the inhale entering your nose and the exhale exiting your nose or mouth.
- Then notice the other sounds in the environment...music, voices, wind, birds, the air conditioner, or whatever is there.
- As your mind wanders into thoughts, stories, plans and memories, bring it back over and over again to your object of concentration: the physical sensations in and on your body and/or the sounds you are hearing in the present moment.
- Repeat the last step, over and over and over again, gently but firmly bringing your attention back as often as you need to—with gratitude, compassion and intention.

Ideally, this meditation will be practiced outside in a natural, peaceful setting.

However, if you live in the city, part of yoga is accepting the reality of modern city life. Sometimes there are “unpleasant” sounds...car engines and horns, screaming children, loud neighbors, the hammers and chainsaws of construction workers. Whatever the sound, see if you can notice without judgement and let go of irritation if it is a not-so-pleasant sound.

Be grateful to the sounds for keeping you in or bringing you back to the present moment.

You can also extend the meditation to include visual sensations (by staring at a candle flame, photograph or other image), smell (using flowers, incense or aromatherapy essential oils) and taste—via mindful eating.