

# The Five Senses Meditation

5 Sights

4 Sounds

3 Feelings

2 Smells

1 Taste

This mindfulness practice involves focusing on each of the five senses individually to cultivate present-moment awareness and deepen your sensory experience.

Take your time with each step, allowing yourself to fully immerse in the present moment. A valuable resource to ground and connect to yourself.

Let's begin by finding a comfortable and quiet place without distractions.

Take a few deep breaths and relax your body.

Remain receptive as  
you allow your senses  
to blossom.

## Look – Identify 5 things you can *SEE*.

Take a moment to observe your surroundings and identify five things you can see. It can be objects, colors, or anything that catches your attention. Focus your gaze on each item for a few seconds before moving on to the next one. Allow yourself to fully absorb the visual experience. Observe any fluctuations or changes in the visual field without getting attached to them. Simply be aware of the sense of sight.

(\*Alternatively, with eyes closed, visualize five things you saw today.)

## Listen – Identify 4 sounds you can *HEAR*.

Close your eyes and shift your attention to your sense of hearing. Listen carefully to the sounds around you and identify four distinct things you can hear. It can be the hum of a fan, birds chirping, distant traffic, or even the sound of your own breath. Be fully present with the sense of hearing, acknowledging its presence without judgment.

## Feel – Identify 3 things you can *TOUCH*.

Bring your attention to the physical sensations within your body. Notice three things you can feel. Pay attention to any sensations, such as warmth, coolness, pressure, or tingling. It can be the texture of the chair beneath you, the feeling of your clothes against your skin, or the sensation of your feet on the ground. This sense of feeling could also come from inside, your feelings – for example, do you feel happy or have a sense of compassion or gratitude? Do you have feelings of anxiety or are you content with sitting here in this stillness?

Explore the sense of touch throughout your body, from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, savoring each tactile experience.

## Smell – Identify 2 things you can *SMELL*.

Take a deep breath and notice any scents or smells in the environment. Identify two different scents in your surroundings or within your immediate reach. It could be the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, a fragrant flower, or even the scent of nature after rain. Inhale deeply and let the smells fill your senses, allowing yourself to fully appreciate the olfactory sensations. How can you use your sense of smell to drop you into a certain place and time? Notice the subtle scents that are alive in your home. They might be pleasant, such as the perfume of your partner or the dried roses on the table. Or you might smell something a bit more neutral, such as the smell of your warm skin after sitting in the sun. Really notice the details.

## Taste – Identify 1 thing you can TASTE

Finally, bring your awareness to your sense of taste. Pay attention to your mouth and notice the taste buds on your tongue and what they are still holding onto. What taste lingers in your mouth? Identify one taste that is present. It could be the lingering taste of a meal, the freshness of water, or the taste of toothpaste. Or maybe you feel your mouth watering as you catch yourself dreaming about what you will eat next.

Take a moment to savor this taste, allowing it to fully manifest on your palate. Explore the sensations and textures associated with the sense of taste.

Take a few deep breaths and slowly open your eyes. Observe your surroundings and notice how you feel after this meditation on the five senses. By noticing the senses in your body, you have heightened your presence in this very moment.

By frequently calling to attention and sharpening the senses before and during meditation, we may learn to reconnect with our bodies, reconnect with the sensations of the present moment, and better understand the gift of life that we experience with each rise and fall of our breath. Depriving your senses of the craving (even for a few moments) takes you from the object, back to its source. This is *vairagya* or dispassion.

*Vairagya* involves cultivating a mindset of non-attachment to material possessions, relationships, and sensory pleasures, recognizing their transient nature and their inability to provide lasting happiness. It is considered an essential quality for those seeking spiritual growth and self-realization.

Realizing that all pleasures are just stimuli - and that you are more than just stimuli - brings freedom.

By *vairagya* (dispassion) and with awareness that you are more than just stimuli, you can achieve freedom from desires. It also helps you overcome the obstructions caused by the senses during meditation.

## Distractions of the senses:

*The concept of *vairagya* is a key teaching in Yogic texts, emphasized in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* as well as other philosophical texts such as the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas*.*

*The senses, according to the *Upanishads*, are the gateways through which we interact with the external world. They include sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, as well as the mind, which is considered the sixth sense.*

- ❖ **Seeing:**  
Eyes bring all sorts of temptation. Mind would be far more peaceful without the eyes. Eyes are the greatest distraction for the steadiness in the Self.
- ❖ **Hearing:**  
You switch on the radio, and every five minutes, keep tuning to different stations without tuning in.
- ❖ **Taste:**  
Cooks often do not enjoy their own food.

## Journal prompt:

What are other distractions brought by the senses?

