

About the Learn to Meditate Course

Overview of the course

There are two parts that make up *Learn to Meditate*, each lasting for six weeks.

The first part introduces the two meditations and the second helps you to take them deeper. The two parts can be taken separately, but there are advantages in doing the second part shortly after the first to establish a regular meditation practice.

Each session runs from 7.15pm – 9.45pm on a Monday evening. There is a break during the evening for tea and biscuits. There is also a practice day near the end of the first part.

The sessions usually consist of instruction in meditation; short meditations; semi-formal presentations by the leader(s); discussion time for participants to relate the material to their own experience; and experiential workshop aspects. Participants are asked to meditate at least four times a week outside the class. Online led meditations are provided for *Part 1*, and meditation diaries are provided for both modules, to help with this home practice. There is usually a review period during each session, providing an opportunity to discuss the home practice and ask questions about it.

Meditation provides a way to help you relax, become more focused, develop your relationships and understand yourself better. *Learn to Meditate* provides a firm foundation in meditation, introducing both the mindfulness of breathing and development of loving-kindness (*Metta bhavana*) meditations. It can help you to establish a regular meditation practice so that you can experience these benefits.

Who the course is for

These *Learn to Meditate* courses are open to all regardless of belief and don't require any particular religious or spiritual orientation.

For the second part of the *Learn to Meditate* course, it is necessary to be practised in the mindfulness of breathing and *Metta bhavana* meditations. This practice could come from attending the first part, from an Introductory Meditation day or weekend or from drop-in classes. You will benefit most from the classes if you have had a regular meditation practice for at least six weeks.

Aims

By the end of the two parts, you should have:

- Become confident about practising both the mindfulness of breathing and development of loving-kindness (*Metta bhavana*) meditations;
- Developed an exploratory attitude towards their experience during meditation;
- Established a regular meditation practice;
- Developed relationships with other participants by sharing experiences and ideas, in order to support their practice.

Course Outline

The content of the two parts will be roughly as below:

Part 1

An introduction to the Mindfulness of breathing and Developing loving-kindness (*Metta bhavana*) meditations. Two CDs and a diary are provided to help with meditating at home.

What meditation is

Creating conditions for meditating

Four types of meditation

Directing attention

Posture

Mindfulness of breathing meditation

Developing positive emotions
Developing loving-kindness (*Metta bhavana*) meditation

Part 2

This module provides an opportunity to develop your meditation practice and take it deeper. A diary is provided with suggestions for meditating at home.

Preparing for meditation
Balancing being active in meditation with being open to experience
Developing focus while keeping a broader awareness
Developing more awareness of mental states
Dealing with difficulties in meditation
Deepening concentration
Setting down at the end of a meditation session

Meditation Practice Day

This day is a popular addition to *Part 1* which allows one to experience the benefit of more extensive meditation practice. The day lasts from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on a weekend . It includes doing a walking meditation.

Participants are asked to bring along some vegetarian lunch to share (such as a bowl of salad or bread and cheese or quiche or fruit).

Other classes and courses

There are many other activities at the Cambridge Buddhist Centre including an *Introducing Buddhism* course. See the newcomers' programme or online at www.cambridgebuddhistcentre.com.