

# 5 Steps to Meditation Happiness

This self-assessment chart is used for **Engrossed Attention (EA)** style meditations - such as the Breath Meditation.

Step One		
<p><b>To accomplish this step:</b> Begin/continue the practice. Stop (stand, sit, or lie down) and intend to focus on the breath. Do not do anything else. Do not control, push, or pull the breath (the <i>object</i> of your observation).</p>	<p><b>Working on:</b> Finding the <i>object</i> of meditation - the sensations associated with the breath. It could be at the tummy, chest, or nostrils (or top-lip).</p>	<p><b>Guidance:</b> Do this anywhere, any-time (as long as you are not purposefully moving - including your eyes). Your awareness of the <i>object</i> can be <i>very vague</i>. Adjusting your body so you can relax is OK, up to step five.</p>
Step Two		
<p><b>To accomplish this step:</b> Stay on the breath by saying “in”, “out” or “soften” &amp; “flow”, or saying “one” on in-breath <b>and</b> “one” on the out-breath, up to 10. Although <i>vague most of the time</i>, you have <i>some contact some of the time</i>.</p>	<p><b>Working on:</b> Staying with the breath and also working on better contact. Being distracted less, by counting rounds of 10 breaths at a time.</p>	<p><b>Guidance:</b> The major work is to <i>bring your mind back from distractions</i>. If distracted but back to count within 1 breath = good. Counting to 11 then realising it should be 1 before the breath ends = OK. <i>Distractions</i> are almost always <i>stress release</i> at this stage.</p>
Step Three		
<p><b>To accomplish this step:</b> Although your object is <i>still vague</i> much of the time, contact is improving and you can do 1-10 x <b>3 rounds</b> (<i>sometimes</i>).</p>	<p><b>Working on:</b> Gaining more contact with the object – so it is felt at <i>some point</i> during the in- <b>or</b> out-breath for most breaths (not all). Only count the in- <b>or</b> out-breath.</p>	<p><b>Guidance:</b> You may also start to notice if the present breath is shorter or longer than the previous one.</p>

Step Four		
<p><b>To accomplish this step:</b> You're noticing the length of each breath as well as having contact at some point during both the in <b>and</b> out-breath. The object is less vague, more distinct, and you're noticing more. You are able to discern the effects of absorption and can let go of counting.</p>	<p><b>Working on:</b> Increasing contact time, so you feel the object during the start, middle and end of a breath (<b>not</b> continuously) as well as noticing the gaps between breaths <i>sometimes</i>.</p>	<p><b>Guidance:</b> Consciously let go of any <i>control</i> you have over the breath, or strongly <i>holding</i> the object. At first you will only have <i>slightly</i> more contact than 3, <b>sometimes</b>, during a 1-10 round.</p>
Step Five		
<p><b>To accomplish this step:</b> You're feeling <i>some</i> contact for every breath, plus <i>some</i> contact at the beginning, middle and end of <i>most</i> breaths, noticing the length of the breath and the gaps between <i>most</i> breaths. You are able to discern the effects of absorption (the cocoon effect), and your meditation is <i>often</i> (but not always) a pleasant experience.</p>	<p><b>Working on:</b> Continuous contact with the object for the in-breath only. Relax on the out-breath. Reducing subtle wandering by returning ASAP. Check for sleepiness/vagueness/dullness.</p>	<p><b>Guidance:</b> At this step you shouldn't need to hold onto the object at all to keep from being distracted. The <b>Principle of Gravity</b> is kicking in, so you can relax more &amp; more. Movement should be involuntary or the result of letting go into Restful Absorption.</p>

## NOTES

These steps can be seen as a guide to the progression of a meditation session, or as steps to greater skill in meditation. The steps above do not mention everything, but it'll get you going in the right direction.

By the time you get to STEP FIVE, you're sitting on the edge between distractions (created by holding too tight, or stress release), and sleepiness/dullness (due to relaxing too much, or tiredness). STEP 5 and beyond are subtle practices, yet the **happiness** (from the continuous release of accumulated stress) makes your body & mind supple and the experience **enjoyable**. It can take **many** attempts to get past STEP TWO!