

Walking Meditation Instructions

Leslie Ellestad

These instructions were given at the March 18, 2017 WTM daylong retreat.

Before beginning your walking practice choose a path that is 20-30 feet long. The reason for this is so that you are not stirring up thinking by pondering where you are walking while doing the walking practice.

Begin with standing meditation, starting with feeling the contact with the earth and the bottom of your feet. Feel the support of the earth and release into this support. Scan up through the ankle to the knees and hips. Then feel the bowl of the pelvis. You may want to rock your pelvis lightly and let it settle naturally. Move your attention into your spine and open to dignity. With your head floating on top, imagine that you are a puppet hanging from a rope out the top of your head. With your skeleton as a support, allow your flesh (skin, internal organs, etc) to rest.

Move your attention into your feet and lower legs. Then lift the first foot, move it forward and place it on the ground. You can label these three phases as “lifting, moving, placing”. When you have placed the first foot you can lift the second foot. “Lifting, moving, placing.” Continue to keep your attention in your feet and your lower legs as you walk. You may wish to imagine your feet as big sponges, soaking up sensory experience as you walk.

When you get to the end of your walking path, you may wish to stop and rest in standing. The end of the path is a good time to check that you are staying present with your experience. Then slowly turn, continuing to be aware of your feet and lower legs and labeling your movements.

Your attention will naturally move away from the experience of walking. When you notice that you are lost in thought, or an emotion or visual or auditory experience, congratulate yourself that you noticed, and bring your attention back into your feet and lower legs and begin again.

The speed with which you walk is whatever speed helps you to gather your attention on your chosen object.

This method of walking meditation is particularly helpful for developing concentration (a collected and steady state of mind).