

GENERAL GUIDE FOR HOME RETREATS

Traditionally, mindfulness meditation retreats have been held in person, in spaces close to nature, which offer the silence that favors contemplation. But, with existing technology, and after the pandemic, online retreats have become more common because they offer the convenience of being at home, with the structure that an in-person refuge provides.

A retreat is the opportunity to practice intensively to go deeper into the experience of mindfulness. It is an opportunity to cultivate concentration, focus, kindness, and compassion, by disconnecting from the usual tasks to get in deep contact with our body, mind, and heart.

If you create the conditions for a complete immersion in the practice, an online retreat can be as powerful as an in-person one. In addition, the home retreat can be very interesting since it is in our homes where we usually experience our habits, patterns, and customs.

By choosing to let go of everyday distractions, tasks that occupy your time and attention, and digital habits that consume you, you will be able to create a space for healing and self-care. It may feel a little strange at first to let go of your routines, but as the retreat progresses, you will be able to find the rewards and satisfactions. It will be a time to find the inner strength that will allow you to live with a greater state of consciousness and connection.

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We look forward to supporting you in your retreat at home. If you choose to participate, we ask that you commit to this format, in the same way as you would in an in-person retreat.

PREPARING FOR THE RETREAT

A meditation retreat is the opportunity to deepen your mindfulness practice in a sustained and powerful way. Since you will be doing this retreat from your home, rather than in person at a dedicated center, it is important that you know the benefits and challenges that come with virtual retreats.

The following general instructions will help you have the most successful retreat possible (thanks to Spirit Rock and Insight Meditation Center for their instructions, which we have adapted)

1. Creating your retreat space.

- Check your email folder to make sure you receive the emails we will send you from hello@mindfulnest.global.
- If possible, arrange a dedicated space for your retreat where you have internet access. Some things that may be helpful include a meditation chair or cushion, a yoga mat, or a blanket for mindful movement practices. If you wish, you can create a sense of “sacred space” with flowers, pictures, candles, or objects that have special meaning for you. We suggest that you notify other people in your household that you will be

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occupying this space, and you may wish to hang a sign on the door for privacy.

- Choose a location for your walking meditation practices. This can be a hallway, a living room or even the room you are meditating at, a terrace, or outside in the garden. You may also walk around your block. Crossing streets or intersections with vehicle traffic is not recommended.
- Time Zone and Schedule: This retreat will be held in Eastern Standard Time (EST-Miami) so it may not be ideal for those in other locations with a large time difference.
- Please print this document before the retreat to have on hand.

2. Considerations for Mindful Movement Practices.

- These practices are offered to be accessible to everyone and all body types. If you feel that something does not support your practice, or there is a risk of injury, you can modify or adjust the movement and rhythm to suit you.
- Make sure you have enough space to lie comfortably on the floor with your legs extended and arms at your sides. If this is uncomfortable, you can stay in your chair or cushion, or even do the movements standing up. If you use a chair, make sure it doesn't have wheels or can be easily moved.
- If you're on firm ground, use a yoga mat or blanket to make yourself more comfortable. Two mats, or a mat, can be helpful.
- Make sure you have a space where you can stand and extend your arms up and around you without touching anything.

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- Stand in a place where you can hear the facilitator's instructions and demonstrations on screen (Use "speaker view" in Zoom)
- If necessary, have a stable chair on hand to help with balance, or if you wish, do not make movements that will make you lose your balance.

3. Electronics.

- We will be using Zoom video conferencing for our retreat. Please familiarize yourself with the platform and how it works.
- To support you and the rest of the group, please close all programs except the one you use for the retreat and turn off notifications. You can visit the Zoom page for details.
- Set your cell phone and email so you do not receive calls or notifications during the retreat. You can set up an auto-reply stating that you can only respond at the end of the retreat.

4. Meals.

- Do your shopping before the retreat begins.
- Keep your meals simple. Consider cooking some food in advance, for example, several servings of soup for dinner.
- Consider making a meal plan so you don't have to decide what to prepare for each occasion.

5. Agreements with partners, family members, children, or colleagues who are not on the retreat.

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- Have a conversation about your time at the retreat. Here are some things you might want to talk about:
- Recognize that this will be unusual, or even strange, for everyone, but a rhythm that works for everyone will slowly develop.
- Explain that this is a silent retreat and see if they can help you stay quiet during the retreat days. If necessary, you can agree on a specific time of day to connect verbally, keeping communication contained for those occasions.
- If possible, ask for support in keeping the common space quiet. Ask them to keep the volume down or use headphones to listen to music or video.
- Let them know your retreat schedule. Hang a copy in a visible place.
- Tips if you have children:
 - If you have children at home, silence throughout the day may not be a realistic option. In that case, you might sometimes consider having conversations about "mindful speaking" practices, like eating together at the table.
 - If they are old enough, talk to your children about what you are doing and ask for their ideas for creating a more supportive environment. Make them your allies.
 - With younger children, embrace your time with them as your meditation practice. Consider choosing activities together that support your mindfulness, for example, cooking or baking, art projects, imaginative play, time in nature, storytelling, or other possibilities, rather than looking at digital screens.

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- Navigating everyday life alongside the people you live with will be part of the retreat, and you will have the opportunity to talk about it with the facilitators as part of the practice.