



Written Description for: Section 4, Lesson 3

Posture Notes for Seated Exercises

1. Sit with the spine straight and relaxed

There are two options for how you take your seat: either the cross-legged position, or sitting on a chair.

If you are comfortable sitting cross-legged for extended periods with a straight, relaxed spine, you are welcome to adopt that posture, as it has unique benefits. One of the advantages to sitting cross-legged is that by turning the feet into the knees, an energy loop is created whereby the energy flows that usually go out through the toes are redirected into the body, enhancing stability and enabling a recycling of energy which encourages it to increase over time.

However, sitting cross-legged is not required. If this posture is unfamiliar or uncomfortable, it is best not to attempt to develop this skill while learning the exercises introduced in this course. Doing so may divide your focus and reduce the effectiveness of your practice. Developing cross-legged sitting is better treated as a separate skill to be mastered independently.

(i) Sitting Cross-Legged

When sitting cross-legged, ensure that *your knees are below your hips*. This alignment allows your spine to maintain its natural arch and prevents unnecessary strain. Any bending or misalignment in the spine can cause discomfort, making you more inclined to move and disrupt your meditation session.

(ii) Sitting on a Chair

If you are unable to sit cross-legged, sitting on a chair is perfectly acceptable. When doing so, proper posture remains crucial. Follow these points to ensure optimal alignment:

- Sit on the edge of the chair: Position your sit bones (the two bony perturbances in the buttocks) just before the edge of the chair and find your balance on your sit bones. For men, the testicles should hang off the edge of the chair (so they are not being sat on).



- The spine is upright. Do not lean back into the backrest of the chair, as this can lead to drowsiness.
- Your knees should be at the same height as or below your hips to ensure that the spine is in its natural arch.
- Ensure your feet are flat on the floor, in line with your hips, and that your toes face forward.

2. Imagine a thread lifting you by the crown of the head

- Imagine a thread lifting you from the crown of the head: this gives levity to the spine and helps to ensure that we do not get drowsy during the session.
- Ensure that the chin stays parallel to the floor – with the imaginary lift, we don't want the head and chin to lift up, which would place undue pressure on the back of the neck.
- Allow the sacrum and tail bone to drop downwards. This, together with the imaginary lift, brings a spaciousness into the spine, preventing energy from becoming blocked.

3. Shoulders relaxed

Relax your shoulders - ensure that your shoulders are dropped down to their most comfortable level.

4. Hand position

There are many possible ways to have the hands and fingers during meditation – a whole volume could be written on this subject alone as there are subtle differences in the energy body that are caused by taking different positions.

The most basic position is for the palms of the hands to rest comfortably on the knees.

5. Lips together, but teeth apart

Keep the lips together but the teeth apart: this helps to ensure that the jaw is not clenched through the practice, and also that we breathe in and out through the nose.

Again, a whole chapter could be written on the various types of breathing (in/out through the nose vs in/out through the mouth, or combinations thereof) and their specific effects, but for beginners,



breathing in and out through the nose is advised – unless your nose is blocked, in which case, breathe in any way that is comfortable.

6. Close your eyes

Keeping the eyes closed during the exercise will encourage deeper inner listening.

In some traditions, it is advised to keep the eyelids slightly open, allowing a small amount of light in. This can help maintain alertness and prevent drowsiness. Choose the approach that best supports your focus and comfort.