

# Setting up: preparing for meditation

**Introduction** It is worth spending time creating the conditions for meditation before beginning formal meditation practice. It helps to be in surroundings which are quiet, aesthetic, not too hot or too cold and where you are unlikely to be disturbed.

Below is an example of a sequence you might follow in setting up. You may find parts of the sequence require more attention than others. You may need to cycle around a few times and even return to some aspects during the meditation.

- It is generally easier to go from the external, your surroundings, to the internal, your experience, and from the obvious and easy to the more subtle.
- It is useful to bring *kind* awareness to your experience.
- It is a good idea to vary the set up to take account of how you are.

## A possible sequence for setting up

1. **Posture** Spend some time ensuring that your posture is comfortable, dignified and relaxed.
2. **External** Direct your attention consciously to your environment, using different senses, for example, looking around, listening for sounds, and feeling the contact of your body with the ground and seat.
3. **Self** Then consciously direct your attention to your inner experience, such as noticing any thoughts that are present, becoming aware of your body by scanning through it sequentially, and becoming aware of your emotions.
4. **Intentions** Choose the practice you are going to do and form a clear intention of how you are going to work in the practice (e.g. kind awareness, being in the present)

Then start the formal meditation practice.

## Some suggestions

- You may find it helpful to start by spending some time tidying your space or making it more beautiful.
- Before you start the sequence for setting up, you could try reading something you find inspiring, such as a poem or something about meditation or your values.
- With the metta bhavana you might like to concentrate more on emotions and be aware of and develop the feelings of contentment, confidence and enthusiasm.
- You could experiment with asking questions, such as, "How am I already prepared? To what extent am I already confident?"
- If your mind is wandering during the meditation, you could try bringing your awareness to your body again before returning to the formal practice.