

# MindfulNest

## Guide to home retreats – GUIDED

A meditation retreat, whether a few hours or a few days, is an 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 to understand the benefits and challenges of virtual retreats.

The following general instructions will help you have the most successful retreat possible. If you decide to participate, we ask that you commit to this format as you would to an in-person retreat.

### 01- Create a container of stillness

- Going on a retreat involves spending several hours in stillness and silence, minimizing communication with others, and abstaining from news and entertainment.
- If possible, choose a space dedicated to your retreat that is pleasant and quiet.
- Try to have things on hand that you may find useful for your practice: a chair or meditation cushion, a yoga mat or blanket for mindful movement practices, water or tea.
- If you wish, you can create a sense of sacred space with objects or images that you find inspiring, flowers, pictures, candles, or objects that have special meaning for you.
- It doesn't have to be a perfect place, just quiet enough.

### 02- Considerations for walking meditation and mindful movement practices.

- Choose a place in advance for walking meditation practices if you decide to do them. It can be a hallway, a large room, a terrace, or any space that allows you to move around for approximately ten meters. You can also go out into the garden or

# MindfulNest

walk around your block. Crossing streets or intersections with traffic is not recommended.

- Mindful movement practices are offered to be accessible to everyone and all body types. If you feel that something does not support your practice or is at risk of injury, you may modify or adjust the movement and pace to your comfort.
- Stand in a place where you can hear the facilitator's instructions and demonstrations on the screen (use speaker view in Zoom).
- Make sure you have enough space to stand and extend your arms up and around you without touching anything, and lie comfortably on the floor with your legs and arms extended at your sides.
- If you prefer, you can stay in your chair or on your cushion; you can even do the movements while standing. Do not perform any movements that cause you to lose your balance.
- If you use a chair to help you balance, make sure it does not have wheels and cannot be easily moved.
- If you are on a hard floor, use a yoga mat or blanket for comfort. Two mats or a mat can be helpful.

## 03- Phones and electronic devices.

- Use your electronic devices intentionally and consciously. Avoid using them throughout the retreat unless it is to connect to online sessions or to review retreat-related material, without distracting yourself with other temptations or possibilities.
- Set your cell phone and email so you will not receive calls or notifications during the retreat. You can set up an automatic reply saying that you will not be able to respond until the end of the retreat.
- To support you and the rest of the group, please close all programs except the one you are using for the retreat.

# MindfulNest

- Embrace this time as an opportunity for a digital detox. One of the transformative things that can happen with home retreats is having time to enjoy the space where you live without engaging with technology or media. This change alone will help you experience a different way of being.

## 04- Online format and etiquette.

- We will use the Zoom platform to meet for group meditations, dharma talks, discussions about the practice, and questions and answers. Please familiarize yourself with the platform and how it works before you begin.
- If possible, set up a dedicated space for your retreat where you have good internet access.
- This retreat will be held in Eastern Standard Time (EST-Miami). You can use a time zone converter to ensure you have the correct time.
- Check your email folder to make sure you receive the emails we will send you from [hello@mindfulnest.global](mailto:hello@mindfulnest.global).
- Zoom links will be available with a password only to registered users. This link will be emailed a couple of days before the retreat. PLEASE DO NOT SHARE THIS LINK WITH OTHERS. This is a community-focused retreat, and sharing the link with others will undermine this intention.
- Please log in five minutes early to make sure your equipment and connection are working correctly and that the sessions can begin on time, with all participants present and ready.
- If your circumstances allow, it is preferable that you have your video camera on during all online sessions. This helps to create a sense of community and to manage that feeling of disconnection that can arise when using an online format. By showing yourself on camera, you support your retreat peers in their practice. It is also easier for instructors to teach if they can see who they are talking to.

# MindfulNest

- Please do not engage in other activities while participating in the online sessions. Give your full attention as you would if you were present in person.
- Please keep your microphone off unless you actively participate in your group or with the instructors.
- Please refrain from moving your phone, tablet, or computer while the camera is on. This helps to provide a sense of stillness to the online experience.

## 05- Meals.

- If possible, consider making a meal plan in advance so you don't have to decide what to prepare each time.
- Consider having some meals ready before you start.
- Try to keep your meals simple and light.

## 06- Agreements with partners, family members, children, or colleagues not on retreat.

- If you live with other people, have a conversation about your time on retreat. Here are some things you might want to talk about:
  - Let them know that you will be on a silent meditation retreat and kindly explain that you need their support to maintain it (low volume or use headphones for listening to music or videos, quiet common areas, etc.).
  - Inform them of your retreat schedule. Post a copy in a visible place.
  - Acknowledge that this will probably be unusual, or even strange, for everyone, but little by little, a rhythm that works for everyone will develop. You may want to hang a sign on your door for privacy.
  - If you are doing a multi-day retreat, you can set a specific time of day to connect verbally, if necessary.

# MindfulNest

- Suggestions if you have children:
  - If you have children at home, silence throughout the day may not be a realistic option. However, it can be an excellent opportunity to have conversations about the practice.
  - If they are old enough, talk to your children about what you are doing and ask them for their ideas for creating a more supportive environment. Make them your allies.
  - Consider your time with young children as your meditation practice. Think about choosing activities that support your awareness, such as cooking or baking, art projects, imaginative play, time in nature, storytelling, or other possibilities, rather than screen time.
  - Navigating everyday life with 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.

## 07- Establish your intention and commitment to the practice.

- When you begin the retreat, take a few minutes to reflect on what is calling you to set aside time to deepen your practice. Why, for whom, and what is your intention for doing this retreat?

You may want to do it for your own benefit and those around you.

You may be doing it to deepen your capacity for presence, serenity, and compassion in difficult moments.

It may be to free yourself from your fears, learn to be more kind, or contribute more to our world.

- If you want and think that an object or image will help you sustain your intention, you can light a candle, choose a flower, or bring an inspiring image close to you. Place it near you for support and companionship. Additionally, to keep your

# MindfulNest

intention present, you can recite it mentally or write it down on a visible piece of paper so you can remember and reaffirm it during your retreat.

- One of the common challenges of practicing at home is getting caught up in everyday life and forgetting about your formal practice. Don't give up! A good dose of commitment, self-discipline, and kindness can help you sustain your retreat.

## 08- Welcome whatever arises

- Time spent in silence and stillness allows you to feel peace but also allows many thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, and other experiences to arise. This is entirely normal. Welcome all experiences, and allow the practice and community to support you. Receive them with attentive and loving awareness and add compassion for yourself and others. Soon, you will begin to trust your ability to be mindful and your good heart to hold everything, deepening your meditation and growing your wisdom and love.
- With the support of instructors, talks, and various practices, you will discover that there are no good or bad experiences. Your mindfulness practice will help you relate better to each of them by recognizing that they are all temporary and part of the changing nature of reality.
- If these experiences become very intense or intolerable at any time, simply stop the practice and, if necessary, seek help from someone you trust.
- Remember that you can contact the instructors if you need to talk to them about any circumstances or experiences that require additional support.