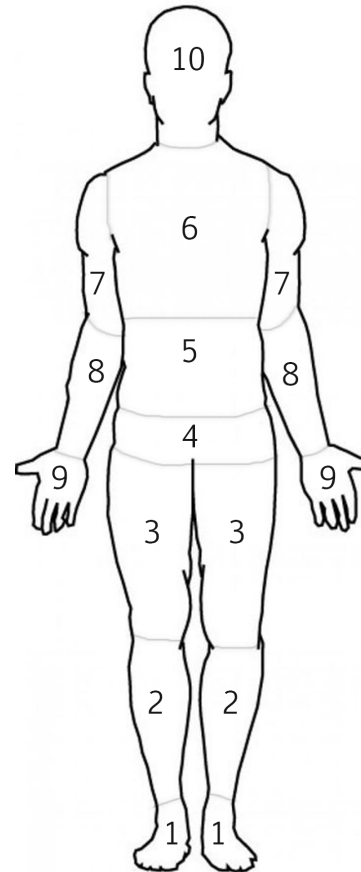


Controlled Breathing

- Sit comfortably in a straight up position and with your eyes closed
- Check your pulse for the speed of counting
- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your solar plexus
- Breath in for 4 counts
- Hold for 1 count
- Breath out for 8 counts
- Repeat 10 times or for about 3 minutes

Body Scan

- Sit comfortably in a straight up position with your eyes closed¹
- Breathe naturally
- Focus on each part of the body one by one
- Simply feel the sensations in each part of the body for about two or three breathing cycles before moving to the next one



¹ If you are using the body scan to help with your sleep, do the practice in your bed laying down.

Illustration by David C. Killpack - November 2014, © 2014 Scientific American

Focused Attention

This practice typically directs the meditator to concentrate on the in-and-out cycle of breathing. Even for the expert, the mind wanders, and the object of focus must be restored. A brain-scanning study at Emory University has pinpointed distinct brain areas that become involved as attention shifts.

1 Mind Wandering

Imaging of a meditator in the scanner illuminates the posterior cingulate cortex, the precuneus and other areas that are part of the default-mode network, which stays active when thoughts begin to stray.

2 Distraction Awareness

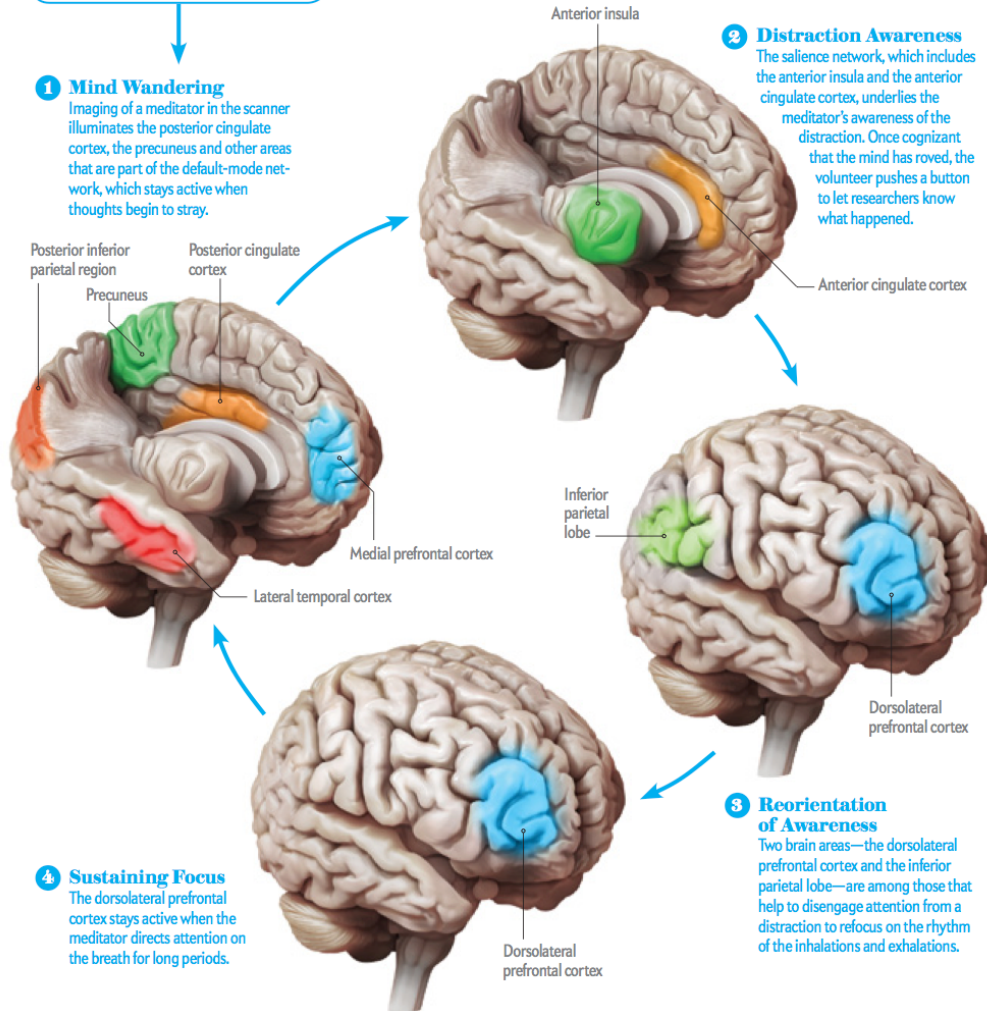
The salience network, which includes the anterior insula and the anterior cingulate cortex, underlies the meditator's awareness of the distraction. Once cognizant that the mind has roved, the volunteer pushes a button to let researchers know what happened.

3 Reorientation of Awareness

Two brain areas—the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and the inferior parietal lobe—are among those that help to disengage attention from a distraction to refocus on the rhythm of the inhalations and exhalations.

4 Sustaining Focus

The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex stays active when the meditator directs attention on the breath for long periods.



Focussed Attention

- Sit comfortably in a straight up position and with your eyes closed or open
- Identify where in your body you will pay attention to the breath (the movement of the abdomen for example)
 1. Stay with the breath (Sustaining Focus)
 2. Get distracted (Mind Wandering)²
 3. Catch it (Distraction Awareness)
 4. Go back to the breath (Reorientation)
- Repeat that as often as necessary for about 5 minutes

² The Default Mode Network will kick in automatically: no need to actively 'get distracted'