



# Using Meditation to Help Yourself Manage Pain and Anxiety

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Being in hospital can cause anxiety, especially if you are here for a surgical procedure. So it is important to remember that you are in a centre of excellence with a highly skilled and experienced team taking care of you and you are here for a good reason. It's well worth affirming those reasons to yourself from time to time.

It may also help you to know that you are not helpless in the situation and there is much you can do to support your own well-being.

Meditation is an effective way of quietening the mind and calming the body. After sitting (or lying) quietly for a while, watching your breath, you may notice your breathing and heart-rate start to slow. These are signs that your body has shifted gear and gone into the (parasympathetic) state that best supports your body's ability to repair and restore and your general well-being.

The practice is simple:

- Begin by closing your eyes and feeling the sensations of your breath – you may like to focus on where you feel it most vividly (the nose, the chest, or tummy).
- Allow your breath to breathe itself – you are not trying to control it.
- Notice how the air is cooler on the in-breath and warmer on the out-breath.
- Notice the slight pauses between the in-breath and the out breaths, and the out-breath and the in-breath.
- Notice when your mind has wandered and is no longer on the breath (this is normal). Note what took your mind away from the breath and if that thought has had an effect on your body, then gently and kindly bring your attention back to the breath.

This simple breath practice can be very helpful whenever you experience pain or anxiety or simply to help you get to back sleep at night. It can be used to complement any analgesia you may also be taking.

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