

Introduction

In this course we will share the most detailed meditation technique found in the Early Buddhist Texts, called ānāpānasamṛti in Sanskrit or Ānāpānasati in Pāli, usually translated as “Mindfulness of Breathing.”

This technique consists of 4 tetrads, containing 16 steps or stages, where the meditator learn how to observe the mind-body processes, including sensations, emotions, thought and the more subtle relationship between these phenomena and the common clinging to these that produces attachment and dissatisfaction.

Ānāpānasati is described as a mental cultivation process that fulfills the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness or Satipaṭṭhāna, the 7 Awakening Factors, Śamatha and Vipassana together, Dyhana, and eventually Knowledge and Freedom, therefore contains the whole path of practice laid down by the Buddha in the Early Buddhist Texts using also Right Concentration or Samma Samādhi.

The purpose of mental cultivation is to develop clear seeing into the relationship of mind-body processes, clinging and freedom from it and to help one understand the impermanence of our clung-to identity.

You can find the discourse ascribed to the Buddha where he teaches Ānāpānasati [here](#).

We will cover the 16 steps in 10 half an hour sessions, where always starting from the first step, we will be diving into more subtle states of our consciousness and contemplation of the processes.

The four tetrads are:

1. Contemplation of form (body) (rūpa) Sessions 1 to 4
2. Contemplation of Sensations (vedanā) Sessions 5 to 8
3. Contemplation of Thought (citta) Sessions 9 - 12
4. Contemplation of processes (saṃskāra - Saṅkhāra and dhamma) 13-16

You can find a detail step-by-step chart [below](#).

We will divide the steps as following:

Session	Content
1	Introduction
2	First tetrad - Steps 1-4 guided
3	Steps 1-4 guided
4	Steps 1-4 less guidance
5	Intro to the second tetrad – Guided steps 1-8
6	Steps 1-8 guided
7	Steps 1-8 guided
8	Steps 1-8 guided
9	Intro to the third tetrad – guided steps 1 -12
10	Steps 1-12 guided
11	Steps 1-12 guided
12	Steps 1-12 less guidance
13	Intro to the fourth tetrad – guided steps 1-16
14	Steps 1-16 guided
15	Steps 1-16 guided
16	Steps 1-16 guided
17	Steps 1-16 less guidance
18	Steps 1-16 less guidance
19	Steps 1-16 less guidance
20	Steps 1-16 less guidance

The 16 Steps of Remembrance of Breathing (Ānāpānāsati)	One word summary	The Buddha's 13 Jhāna Factors	The 4 Sublime Abodes (Brahma-vihāra)	The 4 Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna)	Calm and Insight Development
Right Intention: renunciation, non-ill will, non-harming (basis of ethics). Intend to focus on the breath for x minutes.		1. seclusion: separated from sensuality and unwholesome states			Calm body, clear mind (samatha)
1. Remembering, s/he breathes in; remembering s/he breathes out	in/out	2. initial thought/logic	benevolence (mettā)	Body (kāya) - four main postures: sitting, standing, walking, lying down	
2. Breathing in/out long/short, s/he discerns that s/he is breathing in/out long/short	long/short	3. sustained thought/reason	compassion (karuṇā)		
s/he trains him/herself to breath in/out:					
3. sensitive to the whole body	body		appreciation (muditā)		
4. calming the body	relax				
5. sensitive to zest	energised	4. zest/rapture		Feeling/Sensation (vedanā) - 3 types: pleasant, painful and neither	
6. sensitive to happiness	happy	5. happiness/pleasure			
7. sensitive to the (negative) sensations	tense			Thought (citta)	
8. calming the (negative) sensations	calming	6. tranquillity			
9. sensitive to thought	thinking				
10. gladdening thought	glad				
11. concentrating thought	light	7-8. unification			
12. releasing thought (ceto-vimutti)	happy	9-10. equanimity	equanimity (upekkhā)		
13. contemplating inconstancy	changing	11. remembrance (sati)		Emotions (saṅkhārā) - Processes (Dhammā)	
14. contemplating fading away	weaker	12. clear comprehension (sampajañña)			
15. contemplating cessation	stopped			Insight (vipassanā) into body-mind relationship/ processes	
16. contemplating relinquishment	free	13. complete purity (parisuddhi)			

Table comparing 16 steps of anapanasati to other teachings ascribed to the Buddha in the Early texts.

*table prepared by Brother Joe Smith aka Dhammadasa Bhikkhu.

<https://uq.academia.edu/BrotherJoeSmith>

Sources:

- The Discourse of Mindfulness of Breathing - The Ānāpānāsati Sutta
<https://suttacentral.net/mn118/en/sujato> (doesn't seem to open on Firefox, apparently Chrome works best)
- The Discourse of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness – The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta
<https://suttacentral.net/mn10/>

Discourses of the Buddha from the Early Buddhist Texts

- Sutta Central - <https://suttacentral.net/>
- Access to Insight - <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/> (opened in Firefox, with a page error).