

Mindfulness Techniques for Early Childhood

Gaze (Sanskrit: Dristhi)

Direct Aim: To quiet the mind; to bring the mind to one point of focus; to take the mind from activity to stillness.

Indirect Aim: To respond with reflectiveness, openness, and calmness in all situations; to achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Procedure:

1. Sit in a quiet place, out of the sun, and decide which Dristhi or gazing point you want to focus on today. In this lesson description we will start with the tip of the nose.
2. Take a deep inhalation and exhalation and slowly bring your eye gaze to the tip of your nose.
3. Notice that your eyes cross and then relax. Make sure your eyes are relaxed and you continue to gaze at the tip of your nose – in this Mindfulness technique we make sure we are as relaxed as possible throughout our entire body.
4. Keep taking deep inhalations and exhalations as your eyes stay fixed on the tip of your nose.
5. Time yourself for about 30 seconds to one minute.
6. Dristhi takes deep concentration and focused attention, so you may not be able to spend as much time in this Mindfulness technique as you might in others.
7. If your mind wanders, without judgment, bring your focus/awareness back to the experience of softly gazing at the tip of your nose.
8. After practicing this Mindfulness Technique several times try and use different areas of the body on which to gaze – see the notes below for the nine classic Dristhis upon which you can gaze.

Notes:

In yoga nine classic Dristhis are identified: tip of the nose, third eye just above the space between the eyebrows, navel, thumbs, hands, big toes, far off to the right, far off to the left, upwards towards the sky.

Extensions:

A progressive Mindfulness Dristhi technique will include gazing first at the tip of the nose for about one minute then moving on to the third eye and so on. This experience takes a lot of concentration and focus.

Early Childhood Students:

All students will be able to use this Mindfulness technique if practicing yoga poses, as this technique is part of a traditional yoga experience.