

Meditation Postures Guide

Beginners to meditation practice often call us for advice about how to sit. The photos below depict some of the most common postures for meditation. In addition, they show how our products are used for sitting. DharmaCrafts strives to be a resource for the meditation community. We are always happy to answer any questions you may have about practicing meditation or using our products.

Introduction to the Zafu Zabuton



Zabuton (zah'-boo-ton)
A rectangular floor cushion that alleviates pressure on knees and ankles when sitting. It is the foundation cushion for your zafu or meditation bench.

Zafu (zah'-foo)
The basic round cushion for sitting meditation.

Place the zafu (pronounced za' - foo) almost in the center of the zabuton (pronounced za' - bu - ton), a bit to the back.

Tip: The zafu is almost in the center of the zabuton.

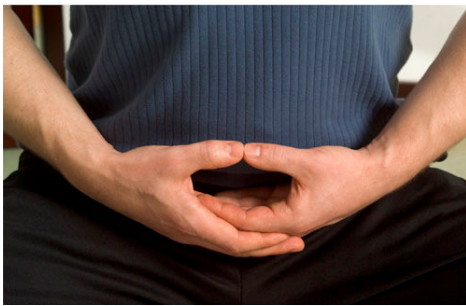


Half-Lotus Posture

Sit down on the zafu. Tuck in one of your legs. Place your right foot on your left thigh, or your left foot on your right thigh. Your knees should have contact with the zabuton. This position is called the Half-Lotus.

Basic Meditation Position

Keep your spine straight, shoulders down and relaxed, the back of the neck in line with your spine. Rest the tongue lightly on the roof of the mouth. The eyes are open but cast slightly down. Hands rest against the body, two or three inches below the navel.



Meditation Mudra

Rest your left hand inside the right hand, palms facing upward, thumbs lightly touching. This is called the Cosmic Mudra, or Meditation Mudra.



Cross-legged Posture

Here is another meditation posture. The legs are simply crossed. Hands rest on the lower thigh. Most important is keeping the back and neck straight.

Chair Posture

Some people are unable to sit on the floor. Sitting in a chair is a perfectly acceptable way to practice meditation. You should not feel self-conscious if you must use a chair or think you will never be a “good” meditator. Most important is to keep a straight back and neck. Accessory cushions may be used for comfort and to adjust posture. In this photo, our model is using a square support cushion at the small of the back and a buckwheat support cushion under his feet.



Seiza Posture



Photo: *Seiza posture using a zafu or the omni bench on top of a zabuton.*

This posture is called “seiza” (pronounced say’-zah) or kneeling position. Many people think you need a bench to sit in this position, but you can use a zafu to sit seiza, too. If you experience pain in the front of your ankle or top of your foot, in seiza position, try letting them slope down the back of the zabuton as our model demonstrates in this photo.

This second photo shows the “seiza” position using an Omni Bench and a Bench Bag for padding on the seat. People who sit predominantly in seiza position usually use a bench because it gives good support to the lower back.

Listen to Your Body



Here we show the Whatever Cushion under a sore knee. When you begin practicing meditation, you should expect to feel some pain during sitting - much as you would if you took up a new sport. Remember that it is ok to change positions if you experience pain. You may even try standing behind your cushion for a while until you feel ready to sit again. It is important to accept your body as it is and to be gentle with yourself. Meditation is a life-long practice. The Heart Sutra says, “No attainment, with nothing to attain”. In time your body will become comfortable with sitting and you will look forward to “assuming the position”.

Tip: Try our Whatever Cushion for extra support.



Lying Posture

Sometimes due to illness or accidents, it is not possible to sit upright. In that case, you may practice meditation lying down. Again, it is important to keep the back and neck straight and to stay awake. Here we show our Roll Up and Go Yoga Mat being used for lying down meditation.

When you meditate, invite yourself to feel the self-esteem, the dignity, and the strong humility of the Buddha that you are. - Sogyal Rinpoche