



**STRENGTH
ACTIVITY**

FRANCIS & FRIENDS

WALKING MEDITATION

written by Rich Nelson

Activity Instructions

Walking, for many of us, is second nature. Unless something happens to our bodies that slows us down or interferes with our ability to walk, it is an activity that we give very little thought to throughout our day. And anything that we give very little thought to has the power to become a powerful form of meditation if we become more mindful of our bodies as we do it.

Walking Meditation is a form of awareness that has its roots in Buddhism and I learned the practice from the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn. But it can be done by anyone of any tradition.

- A. Stand in one place for a while and feel the pressure on the soles of your feet. Breathe deeply and become aware of what surrounds you. You may enjoy this more in a beautiful, natural setting (park, garden, cemetery, shore, etc.)
- B. Begin walking slowly. No need to do anything different than you usually do. Just do it more slowly.
- C. Notice what your body does in order to walk. Become aware of the movement of your feet, ankles, legs, all the way up to your head.
- D. Your steps will create a rhythm. Focus on that rhythm. Listen to it. Feel it. Focus your mind on the rhythm of your steps. You can walk as much or as little as you like.
- E. Stop and again become aware of your body as it stands still. Give God thanks for the gift of your body. Give God thanks for the gift of being able to walk, being aware that some people cannot do what you just did or at least cannot do it as easily as you did.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you notice while walking slowly?
2. Would you have noticed it if you were walking at your usual pace?
3. What else can be done slowly that will help you be more aware?

Supply List

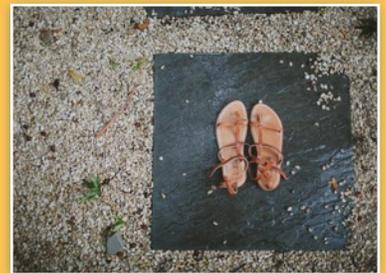
None required

You can print out a basic guide to Walking Meditation at <http://plumvillage.org/mindfulness-practice/walking-meditation/>

You can also purchase books on similar practices by Thich Nhat Hahn:

Mindful Movements <http://amzn.com/1888375795>

A Handful of Quiet <http://amzn.com/1937006212>



Prayer

God, you were with me at my first step. You will be with me at my last. Help me be more aware of your presence every step in between. Amen.