*Ferney House Counselling and Psychotherapy*

# How to meditate

SET aside about 10 minutes initially in a room where you won't be disturbed. Sit in a straight-backed chair, or crosslegged on a cushion on the floor if you find this comfortable. Close your eyes and begin to pay attention to your breathing. Follow the air as it flows into your nose, your lungs expand and your belly inflates; and then keep following it as your stomach and lungs deflate and the air leaves your body.

Your mind will constantly be distracted by thoughts - that's not a problem. Your goal here is NOT to clear your mind of thoughts; it is simply to NOTICE each time your attention is pulled away by thoughts and return to following your breath.

Each time you are distracted, give the thought a label - such as 'thinking', 'remembering', 'worrying', 'anticipating', 'planning', then return to your breath.

It's useful to think of the constant swing between your thoughts and your breath as being like building up a muscle - because you are: each time you notice you have been distracted and can bring yourself back to your breath, you are strengthening your muscle of attention and concentration. This, in turn, is what positively changes the structure of your brain.

## Useful websites/apps for free guided meditations:

- Beaumont Hospital has a great meditation section on its site at www.beaumont.ie/marc
- tarabrach.com - Mediation teacher Tara Brach has a very comprehensive website with useful talks, articles and a large archive of free guided mediations of various lengths.
- **The Headspace app** is also a great way to get into the practice of meditation - it offers 10 daily, 10-minute meditations for free, along with informative animations about the practice and its benefits.