(1) Posture Preparation

Sitting in a comfortable position, allow your shoulders to drop and relax, and plant your feet

firmly on the ground. Or, if you are sitting cross-legged, feel the sense of contact between your

feet and the seat and the floor beneath you.

(2) Mental State Induction

Now gently close your eyes, and for the next few breaths bring your full focus of attention to

your breathing. Notice the feeling of the air flowing in through the nostrils, down into the lungs,

and down into the belly as you inhale. On the exhale, feel the release of any tension as you let

the air out slowly.

Now, imagine that you are sitting by the side of a gently flowing stream. This might be a

stream that you know, or it might be something you create in your mind using your

imagination. There might be a light breeze blowing as you sit here, dappled light glistening on

the water, and soft green grass beneath you... imagine the stream however you like – it's your

imagination.

Now imagine that there are leaves floating on the surface of the stream, and these leaves are

gently flowing past you, down the stream. For the next few minutes, see if you can take every

thought that pops into your head and place it on a leaf. Your thoughts may show up in your

mind in the form of words, pictures, or something else. However if a thought arises, simply

place it on a leaf and let it float by. Do this regardless of whether the thoughts are positive and

enjoyable or negative and challenging. Simply place each on a leaf and let it float down the

stream.

If you notice that your thoughts stop momentarily, just continue to watch the stream. Sooner or

later, your thoughts will start up again. Allow the stream to flow at its own rate. There is no

need to try and speed it up. The aim here is not to wash the leaves away – the aim is to allow

them to come and go in their own time. Just sit and watch.

(3) Reinforcement

If your mind says something along the lines of "I can't do it" or "This is stupid," place those

thoughts on leaves and let them float by. If a leaf gets stuck, let it hang around. There is no

need to force it to float away. Simply sit and watch as sooner or later another leaf will come

along and give it the nudge it needs.

If a difficult feeling arises, such as boredom, impatience, or anxiety, simply acknowledge it.

Say to yourself "Here is a feeling of boredom," "Here is a feeling of impatience," "Here is a

feeling of anxiety," and place those words on a leaf.

Now from time to time, your thoughts will hook you, and you will lose track of the exercise.

This is normal as our attention naturally wanders, and it will happen time and time again. As

soon as you realize this has happened, simply come back to your stream.

Explicit Attentional Instruction

(4) Preparation for upcoming task

Continuing to place each thought that pops into your mind on a leaf and watching it slip by.

Much like the visual illusions you saw before this mindfulness session, we can know

something is there, and instead of holding on to it, just simply choose to let it go. When

thoughts come up, we can quell this movement and return to a state of peace that we choose

and carve out ourselves. Much the same can be done when seeing visual illusions. When you

return to the tasks later, you may find it easy to ignore the biasing red components, choosing

to let them wash over you and go, accepting them and letting go, much like thoughts that may

try to hold you. Through this, you can see what is there. By focusing on what you want to do,

which is see through the illusion and its biasing red elements

(5) State exit

Again and again, your thoughts will hook you. Remember, this is normal. As soon as you

notice this has happened, simply come back to your stream.

As the exercise comes to an end, begin to let go of your imagined stream and bring your

attention back to where you are. Notice what you can hear, what you can feel, and when

you're ready, open your eyes and notice what you can see. You might like to take another

minute to sit quietly before carrying on with your day, holding on to this sense of presence and

spaciousness from thinking.