This list will allow you to run through a quick pre-flight checkup routine to allow for optimal performance in mindfulness practice.

Most of us aren’t used to sitting in a relaxed and erect posture, so it may take repeated practice to work up to an extended period of time. Remember, even though the mind and body may get restless, there’s no extra points for pain! Make yourself comfortable so you can comfortably be still.

1. Adjust your seat height and angle so that your back is relatively straight, and also relaxed. It can help to scoot your bottom all the way into the back of the seat, and if possible, use a rolled up towel, sweatshirt or (ideally) a small cushion behind the small of your back.
2. Check how your legs are arranged – a position with both legs evenly balanced is preferable, e.g., both feet flat on the floor if sitting in a chair or crossed evenly if seated on a cushion, vs. sitting with one leg crossed over the other.
3. Just let the breath flow naturally in and out of the body, and let the belly move freely with the breathing.
4. Let your spine move with your breathing, so that you can be sure you’re not holding yourself rigidly.
5. Make sure that your hands are supported so that there’s no strain in your shoulders or between the shoulder-blades. Palms up or down, notice what’s comfortable.
6. Relax your shoulders, letting them roll back to open your chest. Let your shoulders move with your breathing.
7. Take a few deep breaths into the upper chest to allow your chest to open. Relax on the outbreath, but see if you can keep a sense of space across the front of the chest as you do so.
8. Adjust the angle of your head, so that the back of your neck is relaxed, long and open, and your chin is slightly tucked in. Your head should feel like it’s balanced effortlessly atop your spine. Viewed from the side, the ear is directly above the shoulder which is directly above the hip.
9. Relax your jaw, your tongue, your eyes, and your forehead.