



Wild Swimming and Meditation

About the retreat

This retreat will take a playful approach to reconnecting with the body through the elemental experience of water. Each day we will have the opportunity for several swims in the local lochs and rivers as well as other explorations of water and wet places. There will also be introductory meditation teaching, daily collective meditation practice, and a practical contemporary look at some traditional Buddhist teachings, along with simple creative approaches inspired by being in touch with the water and the beautiful Dhanakosa landscape.

Swim activities will include lifeguard supported bank-based activities, swim trips (for more experienced swimmers) and the opportunity for unsupported personal swimming. There may also be the opportunity to walk by water and explore local burns and waterfalls.

What is the required swimming ability?

Our aim is to give everyone access to the water but there are limits we have to observe for safety and group management. The minimum swimming ability is confident to swim two lengths of a pool unaided and be of average mobility. Some of the trips will require greater degrees of open water confidence and may require above average mobility to access the water. However, we will always aim to give opportunities appropriate to people's ability and confidence.

If you might be considered to have below average mobility, need support in the water, or have anxiety issues related to water, please contact the office to discuss retreat suitability prior to booking.

If you have a medical condition that might be exacerbated by cold water or might be dangerous in open water situations please discuss this with your doctor and advise us prior to booking so we can determine whether we can appropriately and safely support you on the retreat. Please see wild swimming experience and contraindications sheet, which we ask you to complete upon booking.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

- Two sets of swimwear, two towels (camping towels recommended as fast drying), suitable loch-shore footwear (sandals, croc's etc)
- We ask swimmers to wear a bright swim hat in the water, which we provide. If you wish to bring your own swim cap or warm hat for wearing in the water, please bring a bright colour.
- For longer swim trips a wetsuit (ideally a swimming wetsuit) will be essential

- Warm clothes and hat (for post swim)
- Sun cream and sun hat
- You might also want to bring a flask for a hot drink, wetsuit gloves, wetsuit socks/boots, goggles and swimming earplugs if you use them. Water-shoes or thick wetsuit socks/boots can be particularly useful for rocky entry points.
- Loose fitting clothes for movement sessions
- For trips and walks by water – walking boots/trainers, waterproofs, rucksack. And for packed lunches – a sandwich box, refillable water bottle.

Please note: Even in midsummer water temperatures at Dhanakosa are below the recommended British Triathlon Society no-wetsuit threshold for novice swimmers. Therefore, use of a wetsuit will be mandatory on all longer swim-trips.

Dhanakosa does not have a stock of wetsuits so if you do not have one but want to hire one please make your own arrangements. There will be bank based swim activities each day where a wetsuit is not required so it will still be possible to participate in the retreat if you do not have a wetsuit but some of the trips will not be available. For more information see our document on choosing a wetsuit for your retreat, [here](#).

What can I expect from the programme?

Each day will start with a meditation practice (this will be fully introduced for beginners) and an opportunity for a dip in the loch.

During the day we will have meditation and time in the water. The morning session usually runs 10.30am-12.30pm. Lunch is at 1pm, then free time in the afternoon until around 4pm.

After dinner at 6pm we'll finish the day with opportunities for sharing, short talks on aspects of Buddhism and Buddhist mantra chanting.

There will be periods of silence throughout the retreat to support reflection. These will typically be overnight until after breakfast but may be extended to longer periods of the day.

About the retreat team

For more information about retreat leaders, see the profiles [on our website](#) for this retreat. Swim group leaders are RLSS Open Water Lifeguard trained.