

Sitting in Seiza on a Zafu

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Whether you use a zafu or a seiza bench, it is advised to have some sort of padding under your legs. A zabuton is made for this purpose, but you could improvise with a folded blanket if need be.

Sitting Seiza with a Zafu or Cushion:

A zafu or other cushion needs to be firm enough that it will not collapse while you are sitting on it. If the cushion is too low, it can cause too much compression in the legs and feet, cutting off circulation, and that will make your legs and feet fall asleep. A firm zafu is recommended as couch cushions and bed pillows tend to sag and collapse.

To sit on a zafu, you need to sit on it as one might sit on a saddle. Turn the zafu up on its side. Sometimes people will try to sit in seiza with the zafu laid flat, but that will put strain on your knees and it is not an approved posture for sitting zazen.

When you take your seat, your zafu should be leaning upright against the wall. Step on to your mat with your hands in shashu, lower yourself to a kneeling posture and then pause for a moment, to allow the bodymind to balance. Then pick up the zafu with your right hand, and while in a kneeling posture, turn to face the wall and make sure your knees are approximately three inches from the wall. Still kneeling, bring the zafu from the back and place it under your backside. Take a moment to ensure that you are well balanced on the zafu.

From the side, seiza posture looks like this:



From the front seiza looks like this:



Your big toes should cross behind the zafu, left over right, which looks like this: You need to sit with your knees shoulder-width apart and your feet need to touch at the back of the zafu. The big toe of your left foot should rest on top of the big toe of the right foot. You might not be able to get your toes to meet at first, but you should know that this is what you need to be able to do over time.



You could also sit on a chair or a stool. Instructions for that are [posted here](#).

What is important about posture is not how you look, it's what you actually do while you are sitting — how

you practise.