

# Exploring the Five Senses

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts?  Heart?  Body?  None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



### [MindfulnessExercises.com/Exploring-the-Five-Senses](https://www.MindfulnessExercises.com/Exploring-the-Five-Senses)

With this worksheet, we'll explore the five senses as a means of developing greater awareness.

We perceive the world around us by way of touch, smell, taste, hearing or sight. We then quickly apply a conceptual label to that information, often followed by a qualifying description or judgement. This judgement, (bad noise, good touch, scary sight) causes us to react.

Sometimes we react to what we feel, see, hear, smell or taste only to find out later that our reaction was based on a mistaken perception.

We jump back at the sight of a rope that appears to us as a snake, for example. Or we act unfriendly to a friend who first appeared to us as a stranger.

In the following exercise, we'll use mindfulness of the five senses to develop awareness of the ways in which our mind colors our perception of the world.

Through these exercises, we strive to become less reactive to our environment. We practice taking things in with curiosity in place of judgement. When we become less reactive, we cause ourselves and others less pain, resulting in a life of greater ease and happiness. Begin with the following seated meditation...

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### THE EXERCISE: SENSE AWARENESS MEDITATION

- Set a timer for 3, 5, 7 minutes or more...
- Begin in a comfortable seat (your meditation posture) with your spine tall and neutral
- Close your eyes or keep a soft gaze towards the ground in front of you
- Breathe deeply yet quietly in and out through your nose
- Once you are settled, guide your awareness towards sound
- What is it that you hear?
- Without looking for sound, remain open to the arising of sound within your awareness
- Can you notice sound without judging or labeling the sound?
- As sound arises, become especially aware of any tendency to label what you hear as good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant
- If or when you notice that the mind has wandered off to the other senses, to thoughts or emotions, simply return your focus to sound (do this as many times as you need to)
- Remain present with the experience of sound until your timer stops

### WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

**Use the following prompts to further explore your experience after you've completed the above meditation.**

What was your general experience during the meditation?

Describe the experience of zoning in on just one of the senses. (In this example, sound)

What did you notice about the sense that was new to you?

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Were you able to experience sound without labeling what the sound was or where it was coming from?

Were you able to notice sound without judging or labeling it as pleasant or unpleasant?

Do you think it's possible to be aware of sound without *thinking* about that sound?

At any point do you feel as though you were completely present in the moment? When?

Do you think it's possible to create more space between noticing the sound and thinking about, labeling or describing the sound?

If so, how would that skill be useful outside of your meditation?

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What do you think the difference is between “I am hearing this sound” and “this sound is arising in my awareness”?

How might creating more space between “me” and “the sound I’m hearing” be useful outside of your meditation?

### REPEAT THE EXERCISE AND QUESTIONS

After having completed the above exercise and worksheet questions, try repeating the same exercise with the remaining four senses. You might find that some are easier for you to work with than others.

We suggest working with one sense per day. You can begin your day with the sense meditation, and then extend the practice off the mat. Throughout the day, be mindful of that particular sense. Which part of sense awareness is purely physical, and which part is in your mind?

#### Touch

Awareness of touch can begin with the sensation of your body against your cushion or chair, the sensation of your clothing against your skin, wind or temperature against your skin, or the parts of your body that are touching and resting on the other parts of your body. For example, your hands on your thighs.

#### Sight

With your eyes open, softly focus towards the ground ahead of you. Stay here, noticing the quality of light, colors, forms, or actual objects. As you spend more time or as the meditation deepens, try slowly lifting your gaze, taking in more of the space around you. Without “looking for things,” notice what comes into your view.

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### *Smell/Taste*

Without looking for smells or tastes, rest the mind in open awareness, open to the presence of smell or taste. Which smells are ever present, and which smells arise and fade? Is there a particular taste in your mouth? Does it change over time? This is a great exercise to continue off the mat, or to try during your meals.

### REVIEW

That which we notice through the five senses does not give us the experience of “ultimate reality.” At best, it gives us a subjective idea of how our past experiences have formed our opinion of what it is that we see, smell, hear, taste and feel.

Everything we notice has the potential to be good, bad, scary, funny, frustrating, gratifying or awe-inspiring. It all depends upon our minds, and our minds in that one moment.

By deepening our awareness of how perception works, we may eventually give up on “naming” what we experience. In that moment, we can be with our experience absent of the story behind it, and we’re better able to realize contentment, peace and equanimity.

*Thank you for your mindfulness practice.*