

Focusing Away From Pain

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



The power of the mind to focus on particular objects of our experience is both a blessing and a challenge. When we experience difficult emotions or sensations, our ability to focus can result in the mind being fixed on data that reaffirms the pain or discomfort we are experiencing.

Yet on the other hand, focusing on things that bring us peace and comfort enables us to tune out negative thoughts and feelings that do not serve us. These things can be turned to when we find ourselves in need of a mindful shift.

Turning our focus away from pain is not the same as suppression or denial. It is a way of helping us to cope when certain feelings become too overwhelming. This practice can be explored in preparation for challenging times as well as in reflection of them.

PRACTICE:

When we are experiencing pain, it can be helpful to have on hand what might be called a 'Self-Care Toolkit'. This toolkit is a reminder of the activities and practices that help us to refocus our attention on things that bring us back to balance. Again, this is not to be used as a way of suppressing our feelings but rather as a way to empower us to shift gears.

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Take a moment to check off all of the items below that would be helpful for you during times of difficulty. At the end, add any additional activities that are supportive to you. You can come back to this list when you need a reminder of exercises or practices that are grounding for you.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga/mindful movement | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeking professional support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stretching | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing a game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing/painting | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting outside | <input type="checkbox"/> Doing a puzzle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/journaling | <input type="checkbox"/> Body awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching a movie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time spent in nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking tea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking/running | <input type="checkbox"/> Dancing | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a novel | <input type="checkbox"/> Applying essential oils | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching funny videos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading poetry | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a bath | <input type="checkbox"/> Chanting/Kirtan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praying | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking/baking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meditating | <input type="checkbox"/> Making a gratitude list | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning/organizing | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Napping | <input type="checkbox"/> Going to a café | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaking/jumping | <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in satsang | <input type="text"/> |

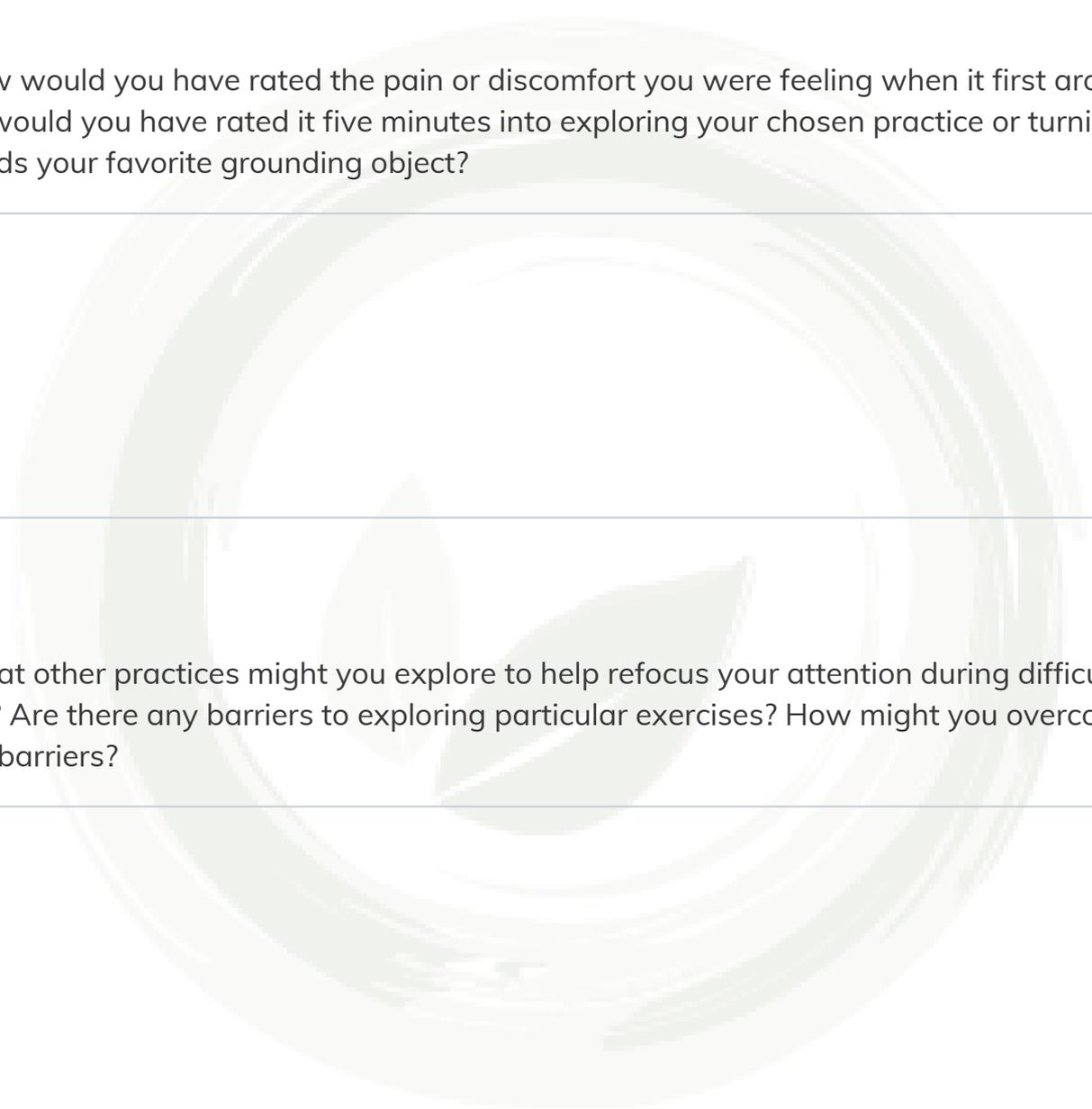
Consider specific objects that are grounding for you as well, making note of them here. These could include your favorite book, your favorite poem, your favorite blanket, or any number of sacred objects. Whatever items bring you peace, note those for future reference as well.

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Now, the next time you experience pain, note which activity, practice, or object you turned to. Then, note how this practice or item shifted the intensity of the discomfort or pain you were feeling. Note your reflections to the questions below:

1. How would you have rated the pain or discomfort you were feeling when it first arose? How would you have rated it five minutes into exploring your chosen practice or turning towards your favorite grounding object?



2. What other practices might you explore to help refocus your attention during difficult times? Are there any barriers to exploring particular exercises? How might you overcome those barriers?