

Body Scan Meditation

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 traditional Body Scan practice is a grounding meditation that helps to heighten awareness of visceral sensations within the body. By tuning into our physical being in an intentional way, we deepen the mind-body connection.

This practice can also help us to better manage pain, to locate the presence of emotion within the body, and to deepen our experience of relaxation.

PRACTICE:

1. You can practice this either seated or lying down. For beginners, lying down may make it easier for you to access all points of the body.
2. Once you are in a comfortable, resting position, close your eyes and take a few moments to witness the breath. As you inhale, feel an expansion spreading throughout the body; and as you exhale, explore a softening.
3. After 5-10 mindful breaths, draw your awareness to your left foot. Hold your awareness here as you become curious about any sensations that might be present in this part of the body. Sensations you might observe include: tingling, contraction, swirling, heat, cold, and even absence of sensation. Even numbness can be noted.

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4. After noting whatever is present in the left foot, move upwards to continue this witnessing in the left ankle. And, as you move through the body, be mindful of what arises in the mind as well. Compassionately note if any thoughts or emotions pull your attention away from the body. Come back to your point of focus.
5. Continue this process by slowly moving up the entirety of the left leg until you reach the hip. Repeat in the same way as you scan the right leg next.
6. Continue upwards throughout the body, noticing whatever is present (even if that is absence of sensation in any regions). After witnessing the throat, continue from the left hand up to the left shoulder, followed by the right hand up to the right shoulder. Then, move slowly up to your crown.
7. Once you have completed this scan, hold your entire body in your awareness. Note whatever sensations still call out to you.
8. Where pain is present, practice breathing into these areas, holding them in your open, compassionate awareness. Note that this practice is not designed as a substitute for taking immediate action where medical assistance is required. It is for deepening our body awareness as it is safe to do so.
9. After holding the entire body in your awareness for a couple of minutes, slowly relax your attention as you come back to the natural rhythm of the breath. When you are ready, open your eyes to the world around you.

NOTES:

The Body Scan practice is a variation of a traditional Burmese Vipassana meditation. Body Scan exercises are also used in Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, as well as in a variety of yogic traditions, such as Yoga Nidra. Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a more active form of the Body Scan, which can also be explored for relaxation.