



Body Scan

Transcript

Body Scan... For this practice, make sure you are sitting in a comfortable position with both your feet placed on the floor and your arms resting in your lap... Take a few moments to settle in, closing your eyes if that feels ok. I invite you to begin by directing your attention to any sounds you can hear around you, being open to whatever comes into your awareness: from outside the room... from inside the room... perhaps from inside your body... See if you can bring to this practice a feeling of being open and inviting, making yourself available to whatever presents itself...

Silence (5 sec)

Now, gently direct your attention to your breath. Notice where the sensations of breathing are most prominent... This may be at the nostrils... the mouth... the tongue... the throat... , or in the rising and falling of the chest or at the abdomen... Allow your breath to flow naturally, without trying to control it or change it in any way... With each out-breath, allow your body to let go as you settle into this practice, letting yourself just be... right here... right now... in this moment...

Silence (5 sec)

Now, slowly expand your awareness to your body as a whole, noticing the general state of your body... Is there a feeling of calm or tension?... restlessness or maybe agitation?... Perhaps there is a sense of heaviness or even aching? Simply acknowledge any feelings or sensations that are present right now, and as best as you can, focus on what your body feels like as a whole...

Silence (5 sec)



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Now, gently bring your attention to your head... Allow your awareness to move around this area... See if you can detect any physical sensations at the back, the top and the sides of your head... It could be a feeling of warmth... coolness... pressure... tingling... moisture... or even an itch... Try not to interfere with any sensations that are present – allow them to remain or to change as they please. If you feel numbness, or do not feel any sensations at all, as best as you can, remain fully present in this moment and observe what that experience of ‘nothingness’ feels like.

On the next out-breath, gently shift your awareness to the face; from your forehead to your chin and from ear to ear. Allow your awareness to float freely around the face, noticing any sensations that arise. Perhaps quietly label the parts of the face you are becoming aware of moment by moment: chin... lips... inside the mouth... tongue... nose... cheeks... eyes... eyebrows... ears... forehead... let whatever sensations arise be. Notice where the sensations begin and end... where they move or change... whether they are restricted to the skin or move deeper into the body... Be curious about each sensation and see if you can allow it to stay without reacting to it. You may notice an itch around your hairline... or a tingle in or around your nose... as best as you can, see if you can notice the urge to get rid of this sensation, instead observing it strengthen... and then disappear....

Silence (5 sec)

On the next out-breath, gently move your awareness to the neck and the throat, simply noticing this area of your body and allowing your attention to stay here for a moment.

From time to time your attention will be pulled away by thoughts arising in your mind – thoughts of the past, the future or even the present... worry or judgment... or critical thoughts. Your attention may even be drawn to other sensations elsewhere in the body. If this happens – gently bring your attention back to the neck and throat and you continue to remain present and alert...



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On the next out-breath, guide your attention into the shoulders, allowing your attention to focus on any sensations there. If you notice intense sensations in this part of your body, explore them with a sense of being curious... opening your mind to them... notice how they change from one moment to the next. As you attend to the front, sides and back of the shoulders, move your awareness deeply into the shoulders – use your breath to open up to your experience rather than resisting, bracing or fighting it.

Now draw your attention down the shoulders and into your arms... from the arm pits to the wrists – you can explore both arms at the same time or one at a time. Float your attention around the front, sides and back of the arms... into the elbows and the wrists. Notice the feeling of clothing touching your skin... or the feeling of air around your arms... notice how your arms feel on the surface they are resting on... Bring gentle awareness to any subtle sensations on or below the skin... Study these sensations with a kind of affectionate curiosity in as much detail as possible. Again, if no sensations are present in this moment, notice this, and see if you can rest your attention here anyway... Whenever the mind wanders, acknowledge this different kind of experience by gently saying to yourself “thinking”... then slowly bring your attention back to the arms.

Silence (5 sec)

On the next out-breath, let your awareness move down and freely float throughout your hands... Is there any tingling... pressure... numbness... coolness or warmth? Are your hands heavy or light? What other sensations are you noticing in this moment? See if you can bring awareness to each of your fingers and notice the sensation of touch between your fingers and the surface they are resting on...

Silence (5 sec)



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Now, move your attention to the upper back and survey this area in your mind. Notice any sensations of pressure or tension... Simply observe each sensation without changing it... If you notice any discomfort, or the urge to adjust your posture - stay with this feeling. Give yourself permission to explore the uncomfortable sensations instead of giving in to the urge to change or get rid of them. If you notice that your posture is no longer upright and self-supporting, adjust it slowly, mindfully, observing carefully the feeling of subtle movement...

Silence (5 sec)

Direct your attention now to the lower back, anchoring your attention to any sensation that enters your awareness... The lower back may be a region that presents challenging sensations for you... see if you can open up to them and create some space around them. If intense sensations are present, hold them in your awareness as you breathe in, and direct your breath through these sensations as you breathe out. Remember, this practice is not about changing the sensations that arise, but about observing what naturally happens to them as we allow these sensations to unfold instead of fighting, ignoring, or controlling them. If no sensations are present here in this moment that is OK, simply notice and observe this experience...

Now, draw your attention to the chest area, as it rises and falls in tune with your breath... Bring your attention to the sensation of your body being encased in clothing. You may become aware of the sensation of your beating heart, or of your ribcage as it rises and falls with each breath... Let your awareness move into each sensation, allowing it to do whatever it does as you anchor your attention to this area.

Now, direct your attention to your abdomen, becoming aware of the belly as it rises and falls with each breath... Notice if any thoughts enter your mind as you anchor your attention on the stomach area... See if these thoughts are critical or unkind and, as best as you can, acknowledge their presence and direct your attention back to the physical sensations of movement in this area...



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Slowly expand your awareness further to include the pelvis... and the buttocks... Observe any new sensations in this area, and let your awareness rest here for a moment. Notice the sensations of pressure as you become aware of the points of contact between your buttocks and the surface you are sitting on... Notice the weight of your body concentrated on these points... As best you can, try to open up and relax into any sensations that are present rather than resisting, tensing or bracing against them... Strong sensations may arise in the pelvis... Again, allow your breath to flow around them, softening these sensations.

Silence (5 sec)

Begin to let go of the pelvic region now and gently shift the focus of awareness to the legs and ankles. Scan each part of the leg by silently saying to yourself thigh... knee... shin... and your attention slowly moves along your body. When the mind is taken away into thought or elsewhere in the body, come back to your legs in a kind way, a compassionate way, a way that acknowledges that getting lost in thought is just the nature of the mind. In fact, noticing that the mind has wandered is just as much a part of mindfulness as is staying with the body part itself.

Silence (5 sec)

And now, gently direct your attention into your feet... the tops of the feet... the heels... the soles... down to the toes... anchoring your mind here as best you can. Study the physical sensations... There may be a feeling of coolness or heat..., there may be a sensation of moisture... tingling... pulsating... or even numbness... And once again, notice the points of contact between your feet and the floor, and between your skin and the shoes or socks... Move your attention around one foot and then bring the same gentle awareness to your other foot... if you notice an urge to move your feet, see if you can make room for that urge and observe it without acting on it... See if you notice this urge, just like a wave, arise, get stronger, and diminish...

Silence (5 sec)



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On the next out-breath, release the attention from the feet, allowing your awareness to freely float upwards along the back of the heels... calves... thighs... buttocks... the spine... the lower... middle... and upper back... continuing to breathe in and out through your nostrils... noticing any feelings of tension, pain, relaxation and comfort around your legs. On the next out-breath direct your attention along the back of the arms... shoulders... neck... and head... attending to the back of the head and the scalp... opening your awareness to the upper body... As sensations come and go, see if you can calmly move the focus of your attention from location to location, lingering and examining each new sensation that enters your consciousness until your investigation feels complete.

Now, expand your attention to include your entire body... becoming aware of your whole body as it is right now, in this moment. Remember, there is no right or wrong way here... there is no need to do anything... no need to change anything... if no sensations arise that is OK... if thoughts arise that is OK, if feelings arise that is OK too... See if you can allow your experience to be what it is, and as best as you can, stay present in this moment, letting go of the desire for anything to be different right now... Bring kindness and compassion to your experience as it unfolds: remembering that at any time during the day you can anchor yourself using your breath and body, and spend a few moments simply being in this point in time...

Silence (5 sec)

Slowly begin to expand your awareness, noticing the sounds around you and becoming aware of your surroundings. When you are ready, gently bring movement back to your body... wiggle your fingers and toes, stretch your arms, and slowly open your eyes. Acknowledge your willingness to spend time on this practice and see if you can bring mindfulness into the next moments of your day.