So, in this video, I want to talk about how to work with pain in the body.

So, how we work with pain in the body is, in many ways, very similar to how we work with distractions, or strong, or difficult emotions, in the sense that we want to just bring our attention to the pain and notice how it feels in the body.

But, there are some important differences with pain, and so I want to bring our attention to that.

So first, when you notice pain in the body, the first thing to do is actually bring your attention to the pain.

Really see if you can notice where it is in the body.

Noticing just the raw, physical sensations of pain.

Pain itself is just a concept.

And so, what we want to do is break down the concept, and actually start to feel what it is exactly that we're feeling.

Rather than just saying to yourself, “Oh, there's pain in the leg.” or, “There's pain in the

lower back.”

Really bring your awareness there and say, “Well, what is this made of?”

“Is it heat or coolness?”

“Is there stretching, or vibration, or tension?”

“What does it actually feel like?”

And see if you can really locate the precise point where you feel the pain.

Often, you'll find that when you try to locate the pain, you can't actually find it.

So, it's very useful to try to investigate in the body, and really just feel the pain.

Noticing the raw sensations.

Now, this might seem like bad advice at first.

You might be thinking, “Wait, you want me to actually explore my pain?”

“You want me to bring more attention to pain?”

And I know it sounds a little bit strange at first, but what you start to realize is that most of the difficulty with pain actually comes from the fear of pain or our resistance to pain.

There’s a really lovely quote that someone once said which is, “Pain times resistance

equals suffering.”

So, if you can take away the resistance to the pain, there’s much less suffering.

Pain can still be there, but you don't have to suffer because of it.

Now, there's also an important difference in how we work with pain, from how we work with things like distractions, or difficult emotions.

And this is to not push ourselves too far in pain.

There might be times when the pain is actually too much; when our equanimity and our mindfulness is not strong enough to match the pain.

In these times, when the pain is overwhelming, when it's just too much, it's really OK to bring your attention elsewhere.

So, you can bring your attention to the feeling of the breath, or opening up to sounds.

And actually just, divert your attention away from the pain if it's overwhelming.

There's really no point in torturing yourself.

Mindfulness is not about gritting your teeth and sitting with pain.

So, if it gets to the point where it's overwhelming, where you just can't handle it, there's no need to keep your attention there.

In mindfulness, we want to come just to the edge of our discomfort, and see if we can just take one step over, and be there patiently, investigating the feelings, without reacting to it.

But, once you notice that you're starting to get overwhelmed by it, just allow your attention to go back to the breath, or to open up to sounds.

This is really about being kind to yourself, being compassionate.

So, learning to take a step back when you need to.

And if the pain is serious and really overwhelming, it's also OK to adjust your position, or even just take a break from meditation.

So, in today's guided practice, we're going to be working with just noticing pain in the body and seeing if you can be there and investigate it patiently.

And then when it's too strong, just bringing your attention back to the feeling of the breath.

So, when you're ready to get started, go ahead and click on that next video.