

Body Scan Meditation

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

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



PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

The Body Scan is designed to help you feel and bring awareness to the myriad of sensations that occur throughout your body. By practicing this meditation regularly, you can improve your body awareness and also better work with pain and difficult emotions in the body. Additionally, people report feelings of relaxation and renewal after this practice.

METHOD:

Summary

Sit or lie on your back and systematically bring your attention to each region of your body, beginning with your feet and moving upwards.

Long Version

As you begin:

- Sit or lie down on your back in a comfortable position with your eyes open or gently closed.
- Take a moment to check-in with yourself, observing how you are feeling in your body and mind.
- Begin to focus on your breath wherever the sensations are most vivid for you.

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During the body scan:

- Try to bring an attitude of curiosity to the practice, as if you are investigating your body for the first time.
- Notice and feel any and all sensations that are present, such as tingling, tightness, heat, cold, pressure, dullness, etc.
- If you do not feel any sensations in a particular region, simply note that and move on.
- See if you can be aware of any thoughts or emotions that arise as you move through the regions of your body. Note these thoughts and emotions, and then return to the bare physical sensations that you are experiencing.
- Whenever you come across an area that is tense, see if you can allow it to soften. If the area does not soften, simply notice how it feels and allow it to be as it is.
- Feel as deeply and precisely as you can into each region of the body, noting if the sensations change in any way. Also notice where they are located.
- If you notice any pain or discomfort in a region of the body, see if you can practice allowing and exploring it for even a few seconds, feeling the various aspects of the sensation(s).

Suggested sequence of body parts:

- Begin with your left foot and toes, then move awareness up the left leg until you reach the left hip.
- Right foot and toes up the right leg until you reach the right hip.
- Pelvic region and buttocks, stomach, low back to upper back, chest and breasts, heart and lungs
- Hands (both at the same time) then move up the arms until you finish with the shoulders.
- Neck, throat, jaw, mouth (teeth, tongue, lips), nose, eyes, forehead, ears, skull and scalp.
- Finally, become aware of the whole body and rest for a few minutes in this expansive awareness.

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HISTORY:

The Body Scan is a variation of a Burmese Vipassana meditation practice that involves scanning the body for physical sensations. This meditation is also done in various yoga practices. The Body Scan is used in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), created by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.

For more information and resources about the body scan and mindfulness-based stress reduction, please visit: <http://www.mindfulnessprograms.com> and <http://www.mindfulnessstapes.com/>

CAUTIONS:

If you have experienced physical abuse or trauma in the past, it is not recommended to do this practice without a trained professional. Additionally, if you notice intense fear or other strong emotions related to a particular part of the body, please discontinue this practice.

NOTES:

It is generally advised to take at least 30 to 40 minutes to complete the body scan. However, if you wish to do a shorter body scan, spend less time on each region of the body, and/or focus on both feet, legs, and arms together as you move through these regions.

If you wish, you can practice the body scan in the opposite direction, moving from your head to your toes.