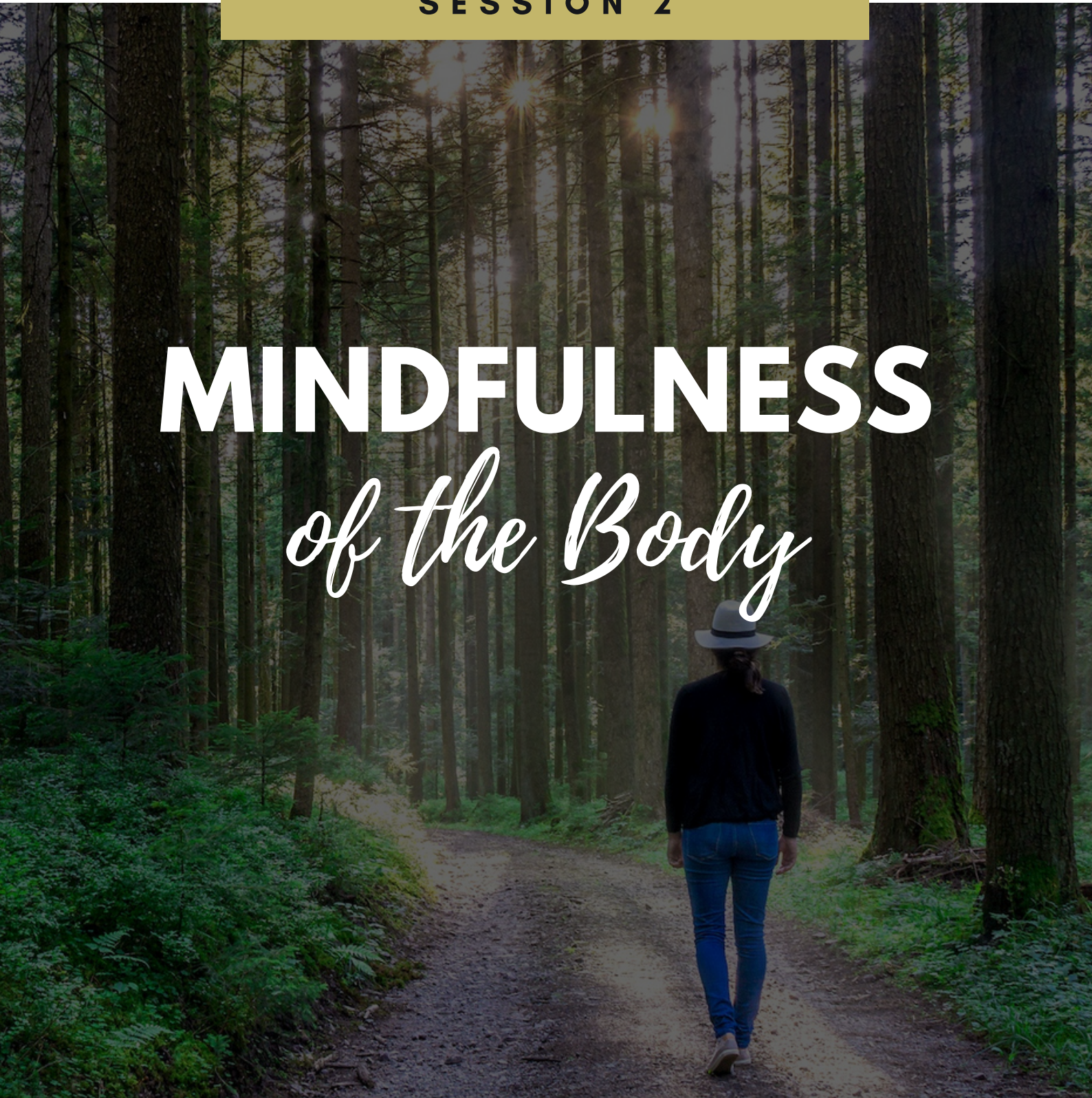


MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

STUDENT WORKBOOK

SESSION 2

MINDFULNESS *of the Body*



Session 2 brings the attention the body's sensations. This week, your independent practice will help you tune in to what your body is feeling and communicating, as you focus on breath, movement, eating, and listening.

The following exercises, meditations, and journal topics will give you something to focus on each day between sessions. Feel free to complete them in any order you like, and even to repeat any exercise you find helpful or interesting. Let yourself be led by your needs and interests this week.

Session 2 Contents:

- Journal Topics
- Common Words for Physical Sensations
- List of Sensation Words
- Body Scan Meditation
- Full Body Awareness Meditation
- Mindful Eating with Oranges
- Stress Eating
- Exercising Mindfully
- Mindfulness of Walking
- The Power of Belly Breathing
- Mindfulness of Sounds
- Witnessing the Body

Session 2 Journal Topics:

1. What are some old beliefs you carry about your body and bodies in general? What did family, friends, school, and the wider culture teach you to believe about bodies?
2. Consider the following physical sensations. Close your eyes and think about what they mean to you, what emotions you associate with them, and what you may want to challenge or change about your beliefs. *Pleasure. Heat. Hunger. Fatigue. Pain. Fullness.*
3. Write about what physical sensations you are comfortable and uncomfortable with. Is it easy to feel fullness but not hunger? Is it harder to feel pleasure than pain? Why do you think some physical sensations are easier or more challenging?
4. How and when do physical sensations impact your emotions? What does walking make you feel? What does hunger make you feel? Think deeply about the ways your body affects your emotions.

Common Words for Physical Sensations

Tender
aglow
cozy
melting
moved
tender
touched
warm

Scared
cold
dark
shaky
shivery
sweaty
trembling

Shame/depressed
draining
alone
contracted
cut-off
disappearing
disconnected
empty
frozen
heavy
hiding
icy
imploding
small

Angry
burning
clenched
constricted
dense
energized
explosive
fiery
hot
impulsive
knotted
red hot
rush

Anxiety
dizzy
fluttery
nauseous
pit in stomach
queasy
spacey
tingling
twitchy

Vulnerable/hurt
achy
bruised
cutting
open
piercing
prickly
raw
searing
sensitive
sore
wobbly

Sad
heavy
alone
blue
burdened
down
empty
hole
hollow
untethered
weighted

Constricted
armored
blocked
clenched
closed
cold
congested
constricted
contracted
cool
knotted
numb
stuck
suffocated
tense
thick
throbbing
tight
wooden

Energized
activated
breathless
bubbly
buzzy
electric
energized
floating
fluid
itchy
nervy
pounding
radiating
referring
shimmery
streaming
tingling
twitchy

Openhearted
airy
alive
awake
expanded
expansive
flowing
full
light
open
relaxed
releasing
shimmering
smooth
spacious
still
vital

List of Sensation Words

- 
- Calm
 - Energized
 - Smooth
 - Streaming
 - Warm
 - Cool
 - Relaxed
 - Open
 - Light
 - Spacious
 - Airy
 - Releasing
 - Expanded
 - Expansive
 - Flowing
 - Floating
 - Fluid
 - Draining
 - Tense
 - Tight
 - Constricted
 - Clenched
 - Knotted
 - Hot
 - Full
 - Sweaty
 - Wooden
 - Congested
 - Dull
 - Dense
 - Frozen
 - Icy
 - Disconnected
 - Thick
 - Blocked
 - Contracted
 - Heavy
 - Suffocated
 - Cold
 - Numb
 - Closed
 - Dark
 - Hollow
 - Empty
 - Tender
 - Sensitive
 - Bruised
 - Achy
 - Sore
 - Tense
 - Tight
 - Nauseous
 - Shaky
 - Trembly
 - Throbbing
 - Pounding
 - Fluttery
 - Shivery
 - Queasy
 - Wobbly
 - Bubbly
 - Dizzy
 - Spacey
 - Breathless
 - Prickly
 - Electric
 - Tingling
 - Nervy
 - Twitchy
 - Burning
 - Radiating
 - Referring
 - Buzzy
 - Itchy

Body Scan Meditation

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.

Body Scan Meditation

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.

Full Body Awareness

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:

Body awareness exercises help to relieve stress by allowing us to become more mindful of how our body reacts to external stimuli. It can be a meditative practice that strengthens the link between the mind and the body, allowing you to better modulate the ebbs and flows of both, thus acting as a sort of informal biofeedback monitor.

METHOD:

Summary

Become fully aware of the body's tensions and then release them through visualization.

Long Version

- Lie down or sit in a relaxed posture and settle into a comfortable state. Breathe in fully and deeply. Slowly pass your mind over your body, sensing each part without thinking about it too much. Find areas of tension or pain that might “speak up” at this time.

Full Body Awareness

- Now, slowly, go through your body, thinking to yourself:
 - Does my head ache? Is there tension in my scalp, my skull, my brain, my face?
 - Is there tension in my jaw? Do I clench my mouth?
 - Are my neck and shoulders tight? Do they ache or feel wound-up?
 - And I holding my breath, sighing heavily, clenching my fists?
 - Is my heart racing? Do I feel flushed?
 - Is there a knot in my stomach? Do I feel slightly ill or bloated?
 - Am I unable to sleep or relax? Am I constantly anxious and manic?

- With these questions, you can find the places where your body holds tension. Consider these reactions. When do they come on—in situations of stress?

- Now, once again pass your mind over your body, this time imagining a healing white light passing over you, perhaps focusing for longer periods on the parts that hold stress, pain, and tension. At this point, your limbs may begin to tingle, and you may even begin to hallucinate very slightly a calming, rocking sensation. Don't be afraid of these sensations! Your mind is working to relax your body.

- With deep, full breaths, visualize pulling this white light into your chest or belly in a slow, healing fashion. Imagine its radiant energy flowing through your body from your core to all your extremities, healing areas of tension and pain.

- Now, with five slow, easy breaths, count yourself back into the “real world.” Be sure to get up slowly to avoid fainting.

HISTORY:

Body-based meditation techniques have a long history. Full body awareness exercise integrates this classical posture meditation with visualization and relaxation skills for a complete body-based stress relief technique.

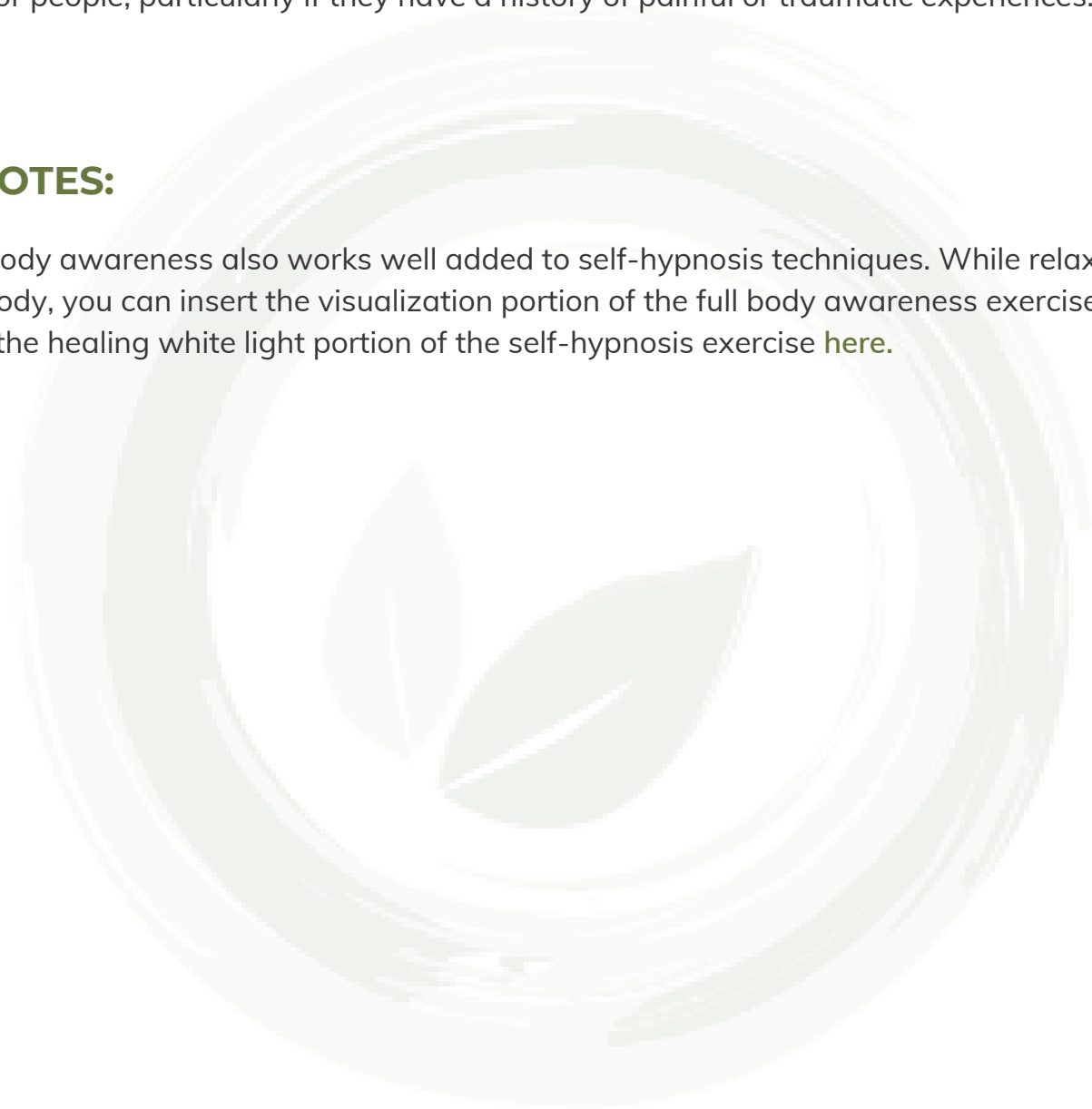
Full Body Awareness

CAUTIONS:

Please don't do this practice if tuning into your body feels uncomfortable or alarming, as it can for people, particularly if they have a history of painful or traumatic experiences.

NOTES:

Full body awareness also works well added to self-hypnosis techniques. While relaxing the body, you can insert the visualization portion of the full body awareness exercise in with the healing white light portion of the self-hypnosis exercise [here](#).



Mindful Eating with Oranges

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



1. As you begin this exercise, eliminate any distractions and focus all of your awareness on the experience.
2. Hold the orange in your hand and examine it. Look at the orange as if you have never seen an orange before. Look at the color of the orange, feel the texture of the orange. Notice how the skin of the orange is filled with tiny little “pinpricks” and how the orange skin feels against your fingertips.
3. Put the orange up to your nose and smell the aroma of the orange. Put the orange up to your ear and shake it to hear if it makes a sound. Keeping the orange to your ear, gently squeeze the orange with your hand and notice if you hear any sound from the inside of the orange.
4. As you begin to peel the orange notice the sound it makes as you peel it, notice the aroma of the orange growing stronger as it is peeled. If the juice of the orange drips, feel it with your fingertips -- does it feel warm or cold, is the texture sticky or watery?
5. Once you have the orange peeled, look closely at the orange. See the difference in the color of the inside of the orange in contrast to the skin of the orange. Examine the white fibrous veins of the orange. Notice the divot in the orange where the stem was once attached.

Mindful Eating with Oranges

6. As you break open the orange notice the sound it makes as you break it apart into sections. Take one section of the orange and look at it closely. Examine the contrast of the fibrous outer portion of the orange to the smoothness of the inner wedge portion.

7. Watch the spray of juice as you break the section of the orange open. Notice the individual little pulps within the orange section brimming with juice.

8. Slowly bring the orange to your mouth, notice how your mouth begins to water in anticipation and how your hand leads your arm to your mouth. Gently place the orange in your mouth, letting it lie on your tongue first without taking a bite, exploring the feel of the orange in your mouth.

9. Now bite down on the orange and notice the taste of the orange. Slowly begin to chew the orange and notice which side of the mouth it goes to while you chew. Feel how the texture and consistency of the orange changes as you chew it.

10. When you are ready to swallow the orange be conscious of the act of swallowing, try to feel the sensations of swallowing the orange as it moves down your throat and into your stomach.

11. What did you notice about the orange with your senses during this exercise? Were you surprised? Did any memories come to mind during this exercise? Write down any thoughts you had during this exercise.



12. Eating is a wonderful exercise for mindfulness. Take your time and enjoy eating as an experience, giving all of your attention to the process of eating and really tasting it without the distraction of eating while doing other things such as watching television, driving, reading, etc.

Mindful Eating with Oranges

13. Try this exercise a few times during the next week and see if you notice more enjoyment in eating.

How will you take what you learned from this forward into your life?



Stress Eating

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



1. Psychological stress, generally caused by feelings of anxiety, affects our lives in many ways that we don't see. It can affect sleep patterns, relationships with others and health, mainly weight issues.
2. For some people, anxiety causes them to lose their appetite, often causing a loss of weight. But for others, anxiety causes a craving for "comfort" foods, often unhealthy food choices which can cause a weight gain.
3. Stress can trigger high levels of cortisol, which is known as the stress hormone, to be released from our adrenal gland, and also trigger insulin to be released from our pancreas.
4. These in turn stimulate appetite. So after a stressful event, you may feel very hungry, but it could be from a high level of cortisol and not a true caloric need.
5. Mindful breathing and body awareness, can help you focus on your physical state and determine if the hunger feeling is true hunger or emotional hunger.
6. High cortisol and insulin can cause a craving for "comfort" food-- sweet or salty foods that are high in fat. Once the comfort foods are consumed, the cortisol hormone is lowered, which calms the stress response.

Stress Eating

7. This, however, is only a short term effect until the anxiety triggers the cortisol again, then the cycle repeats. This continuous cycle can lead to feelings of guilt and excess calories from giving in to the cravings.

8. High cortisol and insulin causes the body to take in more calories than it burns so these calories are stored as visceral fat (belly fat).

9. Belly fat is more harmful to health than fat stored elsewhere in the body because visceral fat releases pro-inflammatory factors and fatty acids into the blood. On the bright side, visceral fat is the easiest to lose, and losing just a few inches from the waist can dramatically reduce risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

10. Mindfulness can help prevent stress eating and the impulse to turn to food and give in to cravings by providing alternative coping responses for anxiety.

11. Mindful eating can also be helpful when the craving is too strong to resist by promoting awareness and enjoyment of the food being consumed - eating more slowly and savoring the food, thereby satisfying the craving with a smaller portion.

Stress eating journal

Think about past stressful situations, do you tend to eat when you are feeling stressed? If yes, what foods do you generally eat during stressful times? List these foods below and see if these are healthy or unhealthy food choices.

During the next few weeks, write down any stressful situations you encounter and how you dealt with the situation. Did you use mindfulness practices for an alternative coping response to your anxiety or did you give in to the cravings of stress eating? If you turned to comfort food, were you able to use mindful eating to satisfy your craving with a smaller portion?

Stress Eating

Whatever your response, do not be discouraged, it takes time to break an unhealthy habit just as it takes time to develop one. Awareness of the situation is in your favor though as it is impossible to break a habit you are unaware of.

How will you take what you learned from this forward into your life?

Exercising Mindfully

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

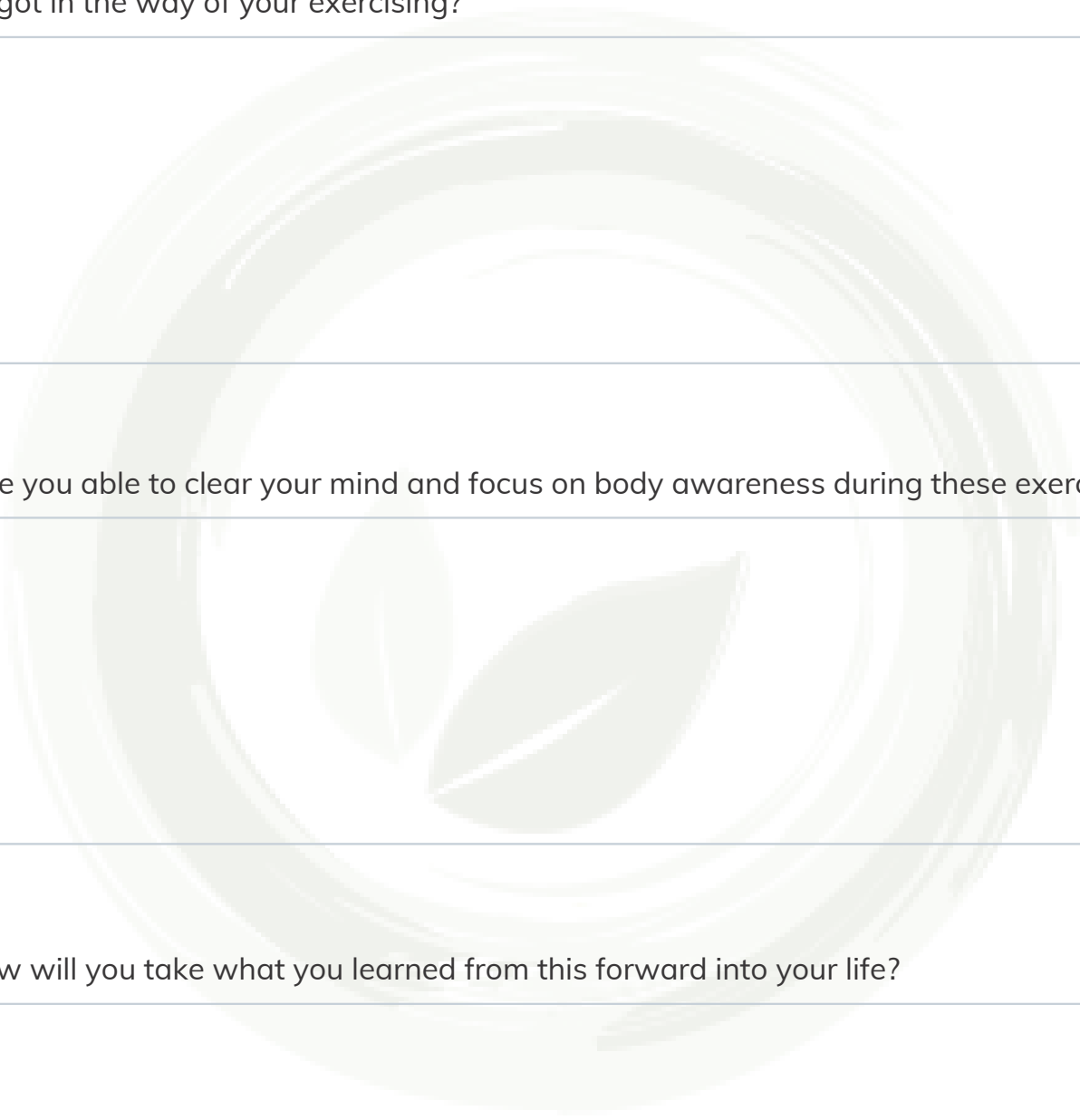


1. Exercise is a great way to release stress. It increases your endorphins and decreases the production of stress hormones.
2. By including mindfulness in your exercise program, you can expand the benefits gained from your activities. You can also keep from overdoing it by listening to your body's response.
3. Mindfulness fosters a sense of awareness. There are hundreds of ways you can move your body with awareness and stay healthy. Yoga, bicycling, running, dancing, stretching, swimming or working out are just a few examples.
4. Walking is an excellent choice as well. It is easy to do, it does not require any special equipment and can be done almost anywhere at anytime.
5. Mindfulness can also be an excellent motivator to begin an exercise program. Mindfulness encourages you to listen to your body and determine its needs.
6. If you lack motivation to exercise, take some time to examine what obstacles are getting in your way. Try to establish strategies to make it easier for you to exercise, such as exercising with a friend or finding physical activities that you enjoy to get you started.

Exercising Mindfully

7. During the next week try exercising with mindfulness. Write down what exercises you chose and if you were able to incorporate mindfulness into them.

8. Did you enjoy the exercises you chose? Were you motivated to exercise? What obstacles, if any, got in the way of your exercising?



9. Were you able to clear your mind and focus on body awareness during these exercises?

10. How will you take what you learned from this forward into your life?

Mindfulness of Walking

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



1. Walking meditation allows you to feel grounded and leave the stress and anxiety behind. Generally when you walk it is to go from one point to another, being constantly in motion to get somewhere.
2. Mindful walking has a deliberate purpose, with each step you are arriving in the present moment.
3. We all learn to walk as babies and have probably done it every day since then without a second thought. We take for granted the ability of our feet to balance our body.
4. Mindful walking develops awareness of your body. You begin to notice the movement of each foot as you go through the motions of walking - - lifting the foot, moving the foot forward and then placing the foot back down with each step.
5. This is a simple process but in the beginning before lifting the other foot, you should finish one step completely. "Lift the foot, move the foot, place the foot. Lift the foot, move the foot, place the foot."
6. Begin this process slowly and become aware of the movement of your body. You will experience many changes during the day. Sometimes you will walk slow and other times you will walk quickly, depending on your circumstances.

Mindfulness of Walking

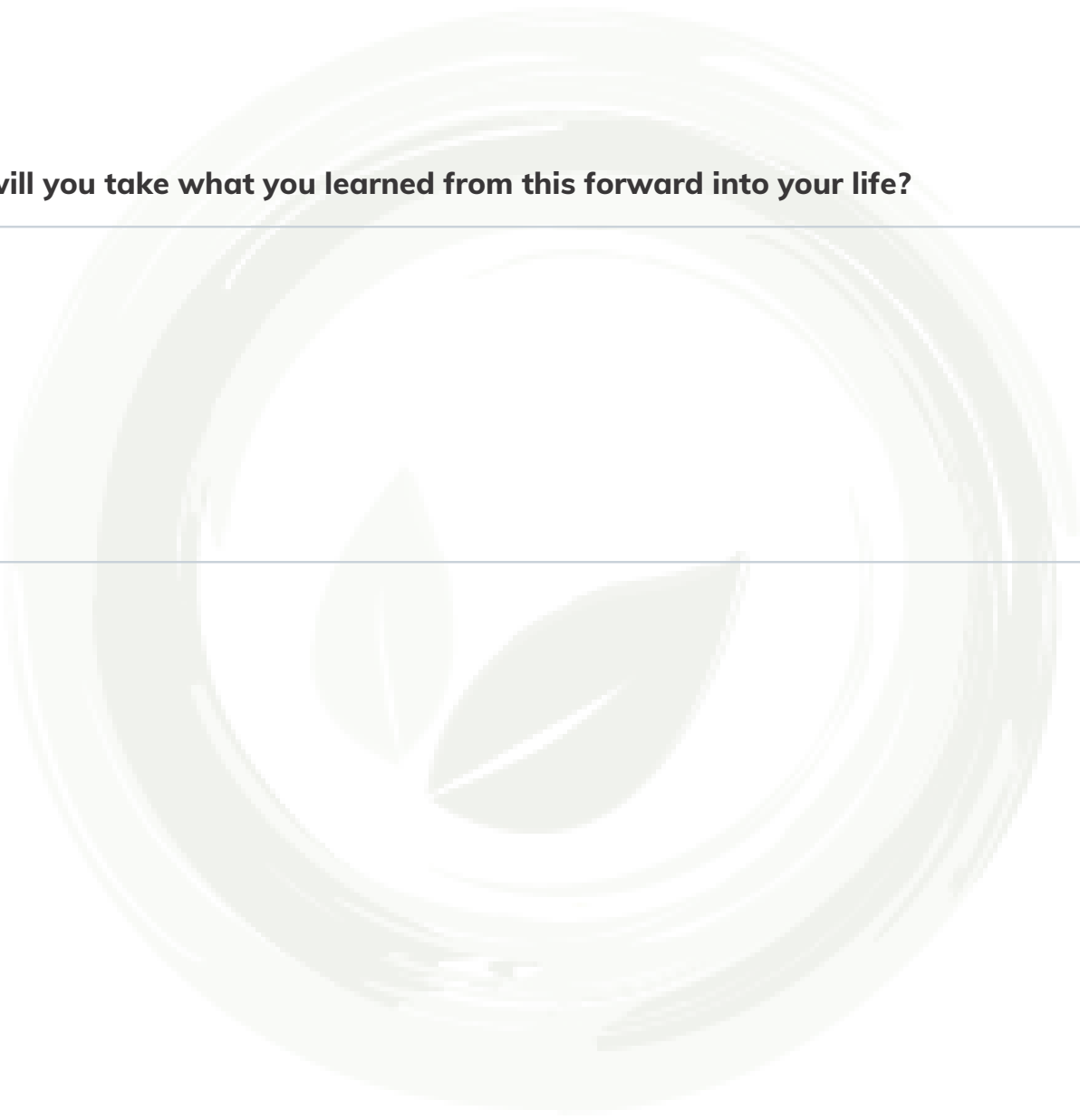
7. Focus on the sensation of the movement of lifting each foot, moving it forward and placing it back down. Practice walking meditation throughout your day a few minutes at a time.
8. Find a peaceful spot where you can walk back and forth undisturbed for about ten minutes no more than ten to twenty feet without distractions. Focus all of your attention to this exercise.
9. First begin to walk slowly noticing the sensation on the bottom of your feet, from the tips of your toes to the back of your heel, as each foot touches the ground.
10. Pay attention to the movement of your body as you walk, not only your feet but your entire body – the side to side movements of your hips, the back and forth swing of your arms.
11. Pause for a moment and stand still. Notice the feeling of your body standing on the ground.
12. Take a look at your surroundings, noticing the sounds, sights, and smells. Acknowledge any emotions or thoughts.
13. Now begin to walk again, focusing only upon walking as you place your weight on the right leg and lift up the left foot, moving it forward, and placing it back down on the ground.
14. Now shift the weight to the left leg and begin to lift up the right foot, moving it forward, and placing it back down on the ground.
15. Slowly begin walking once again noticing the sensation on the bottom of your feet, from the tips of your toes to the back of your heel, as each foot touches the ground.
16. Pay attention to the side to side movements of your hips, the back and forth swing of your arms.
17. Be aware of each step until you come to your designated stopping point. Then notice the elaborate process involved with turning and with mindfulness continue to walk back to your starting point.
18. Be solely focused on each step.

Mindfulness of Walking

19. One step at a time, continue the process of walking, turning, and returning to your starting point.

20. Walk with mindfulness.

How will you take what you learned from this forward into your life?



The Power of Belly Breathing

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



Due to the increasing stress and pace of modern day life, many of us have forgotten how to breathe deeply. When we are in a balanced state of being, the natural breath engages the diaphragm – a thin skeletal muscle that rests between the chest and the abdomen. When the diaphragm is used in breathing, the stomach rises and falls with ease – and as it does so, it helps to initiate feelings of ease and relaxation.

The alternative to this is breathing exclusively into the chest. When we breathe shallowly like this, we promote the body's 'fight or flight' mode and associated feelings of stress. Deepening the breath helps to bring us back into a restful state of being.

If you have not practiced belly breathing before, explore the following practice while resting on your back. This will make it easier for your to sense which part of the body is rising and falling as you breathe.

PRACTICE:

1. Resting on your back, place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest.
2. Take a few normal breaths to first observe which part of the body is rising and falling with each breath – Is most of the movement happening in the hand resting on your chest or the one on your belly?

The Power of Belly Breathing

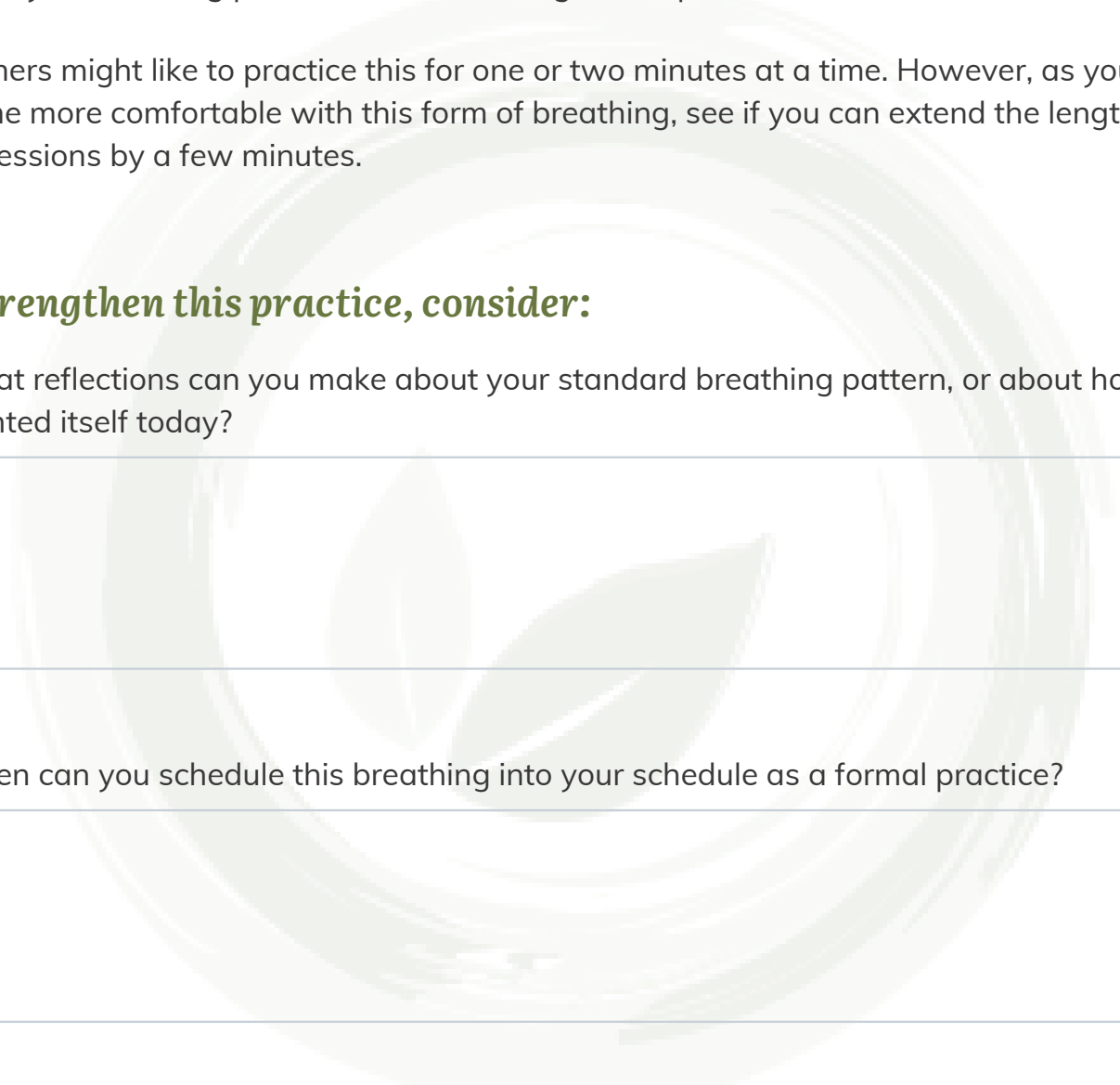
3. Now, see if you can deepen your breath by softening the belly. Take one minute to explore this, seeing if you can let most of the movement be in your stomach rather than in your chest.

4. Let your breath come back to its natural depth and pace. Notice the state of your mind and body after having practiced this breathing technique.

Beginners might like to practice this for one or two minutes at a time. However, as you become more comfortable with this form of breathing, see if you can extend the length of your sessions by a few minutes.

To strengthen this practice, consider:

1. What reflections can you make about your standard breathing pattern, or about how it presented itself today?



2. When can you schedule this breathing into your schedule as a formal practice?

3. Where can you practice belly breathing informally (i.e. while on the bus, while walking, before a big presentation)?

Mindfulness of Sounds

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



Sound is a deeply grounding force that, when tuned into, can help us come back to the present moment with utmost ease.

It does not matter whether the sound that fills the air around us is soft or loud; what matters is how attentive we are to it. This practice is a simple mindfulness of sounds meditation that invites us to tune into this sense with greater awareness.

PRACTICE:

1. Set and start a timer for three to five minutes so that you do not have to think about when you should end this practice.
2. Come to a comfortable seated position, closing the eyes when you are ready. Take a few natural breaths with awareness to settle into this practice.
3. Once grounded, shift your awareness to your sense of sound, noting whatever arises without judgment or assessment. You do not have to search for anything specific; let the world offer itself to you through your ears.

Mindfulness of Sounds

4. Sounds might come from near or from far; it does not matter. See if you might soften any tendency to label them as you become more open to their raw expression.
5. Consider the noises that fill you to be like a symphony, with notes coming and going, rising and fading.
6. Continue listening to the music of life that fills you until the timer rings. Turn it off and then come back to close-eyed breath awareness for three full cycles. When you feel ready to return to the world around you, slowly open your eyes.

NOTES:

Mindfulness of sounds is a practice that holds roots in various Buddhist traditions. In some meditations, the ringing of bells is incorporated.

You might explore this practice in various settings, such as in an urban environment versus a more natural landscape. See if you can be present with each practice without judging or labelling the experience. You can still note whatever sensations or feelings arise for you in conjunction with particular sounds.

Witnessing the Body

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



How often do we take the time to really be present with the physical body? As modern day humans, we often find ourselves caught up in the experience of the mind rather than in the felt experience of the body.

Coming back to the body with our full, loving attention is a deeply settling practice that can offer us a time-out from the thinking mind.

This practice is a basic body scan that invites us to mindfully explore what it feels like to be in this human form. It is a gentle, compassionate practice that can help us to witness and nurture ourselves simply through mindful direction of our attention.

PRACTICE:

1. This meditation is best explored while lying down flat on one's back. Use anything you need for support and comfort, perhaps tucking a pillow or blanket beneath your knees, your lower back, or your head.
2. Close your eyes when you are ready and take five to ten mindful breaths to help you settle into the practice.

Witnessing the Body

3. Drawing your attention to the left toes to begin with, you will slowly start to scan the body upwards as you witness each part of yourself with closed eyes. As you pause on various parts of the body, you may do any (or multiple) of the following:

- Simply be present with what is there, neither seeking nor denying anything, and/or
- Envision a nourishing breath moving into this part of the body, and/or
- Send a loving thought to this part of your body

4. You can flow through your body in your own way or you can follow the path suggested here:

- The left toes and then slowly up to the left hip
- The right toes and then slowly up to the right hip
- The pelvic floor and space between the hips
- The lower belly
- The center of the belly
- The heart space and the chest
- The lower back and then slowly up the spine to the upper back
- The left fingers and then slowly up to the left shoulder
- The right fingers and then slowly up to the right shoulder
- The neck, front and back
- The jaw, the mouth, the cheeks, and the nose
- The forehead, the top of the head, and then the back of the head

5. When you have moved through the entire body, hold the fullness of your being in your awareness. See if there is any other part of you that yearns for you to witness it, to breathe into it, or to send it loving thoughts.

6. When you feel finished, take a few grounding breaths and then slowly open your eyes. Take your time to rise from this lying down position.