

Body Scan

Lie down in a comfortable place like a carpeted floor, couch or bed. Although you may feel sleepy or your mind may drift while doing this exercise, the goal is to try and remain alert and aware of the present moment.

Gently close your eyes. Let your shoulders drop down and away from your ears. Bring your attention to your breathing. Breathe in...and out... and just allow yourself to continue to breathe naturally.

The aim of this exercise is to bring awareness to the physical sensations in different parts of your body. Your mind is probably used to labeling these sensations as good or pleasurable; or bad, uncomfortable, or even painful. For this exercise, see if you are able to just notice what you feel without judgment – for example, do you notice tingling, warmth, pulsating, tightness, or other sensations. Again, it's not about whether these sensations are good or bad, it's just about noticing them.

Continue to breathe at your own pace, allowing each breathe to come as it may, without any conscious effort to change your breathing. Notice your lungs slowly fill with air when you breathe in and deflate when you breathe out.

Now, bring your awareness to where your body makes contact with the floor, couch or bed. On each outbreath, allow yourself to let go, to sink a little deeper into the surface below you.

Scan your left foot for any sensations. Simply become aware of them. Scan your left calf. Notice and allow any sensations that may be present. Scan slowly, up through your thigh now. Allow yourself to feel any and all sensations. If you don't feel anything at the moment, that's okay. Just allow yourself to "not" feeling anything.

If you do become aware of tension, or other intense sensations in a particular part of your body, see if you can "breathe in" to it —using the in-breath to bring a gentle awareness to the sensations present in your body, without trying to change them.

Now, scan for any sensation in your right foot your calf and thigh. Simply notice all sensations and feel what is happening. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity to the sensations in your right leg.

The mind will inevitably wander away from the breath and the body from time to time, which is normal. When you notice your mind has wandered, gently acknowledge it, and then return your attention to the part of the body you intended to focus on.

Now focus on your stomach. Feel it rising as you breathe in. Sinking as you exhale. Nice and slow. Your heart rate may slow down. This is normal. Remain aware of your stomach, your breath. Breathe in... and out... Continue to notice any sensations in your stomach area.

Now scan for any sensations in your left hand and arm. Simply become aware of the different sensations and feel what is happening. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity to the sensations. Again, If you don't feel anything at the moment, that's okay.

Scan for any sensations in your right hand and arm. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity to the sensations.

Come back up to your chest. Continue scanning up along your neck, and to your face. Feel the sensations in your jaw, and your throat. Notice how the back of your head rests against the surface under you. Bring your awareness the top of your head.

Now, take a moment to notice how *all* your body parts are connected. Let any sensations come to you. Just notice what kind of sensation it is – tingling, warmth, coolness, heaviness, floating. Accept whatever sensation there is as just that, a sensation that will arise and slowly and gradually change. It is just another part of you.

Continue to focus on your breathing for as long as you like. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and bring your attention back to your surroundings.