



Body Scan Meditation

Settle into a posture that cultivates wakefulness. In this meditation we will rest our awareness on the body. Throughout the practice our focal point will be different regions of the body - the goal is not to make the body feel any different but rather, notice what sensations arise in your awareness.

I welcome you to take a few deep breaths, binding your awareness to the full breath from start to finish. And then finding your natural rhythm. Allow the breath to be present but in the background. Knowing that we can always return here if our attention drifts at any time throughout the practice.

Arriving home, in the body, beginning the body scan practice by bringing your full attention to your feet. Notice the toes. The space in between the toes. The soles of your feet. Perhaps observe where your feet might be making contact with the floor beneath you. The heels. The tops of your feet. And the ankles. Seeing if you can detect any sensations of warmth or coolness. Moisture or dryness. And if applicable, noticing where socks or shoes might surround your feet.

Letting go of the focus on the feet and returning to the breath wherever you feel the sensations the strongest. And now placing the attention on the legs so that it includes the calves. The shins. The front and back of the knees. The thighs. The hamstrings. What do you notice in this region of the body? Perhaps noticing where your legs make contact with clothing.

Releasing the focus on the legs and returning to the breath. And now directing the attention to the pelvic area. Noticing everything in between the left and right sides. If you're sitting, notice where the buttocks makes contact with the seat beneath you. Acknowledging the weight of our body being supported by this region.

Notice that you're not being asked to think about your body but to experience it directly through your senses. And if you don't notice any particular sensations arise, just noting that to yourself.

Detaching our focus on the pelvic region and returning to the breath. And choosing to invite the sensations of the torso into our awareness. Can you feel the gentle rise and fall of the lower abdomen on each breath? What do you notice in the chest? Perhaps the heart beat. The rise and fall of the ribcage on each breath. Including the lower and upper back regions in your awareness. Has your posture changed since beginning the practice? If so see if you can alter it ever so slightly, gently straightening the spine one vertebrae at a time.

Disengaging the focus on the front and back of the torso and returning to the breath. And bringing your full attention to the palms. The fingertips. Can you feel the temperature of the room with your hands? Allowing the focus to include the forearms. The upper arms. The shoulders, which can often be a place where we hold stress. If you notice any tension here - maybe you're holding your shoulders high. Try breathing into it, seeing if it can ease the tension even if it's just by one percent. Allowing them to fall further away from your head. Simply being with this region.

Bringing a kind attention to your experience when the mind wanders away from the focus of your practice. No need to judge yourself for wandering. That moment you notice this has happened - that is a moment of mindfulness. Simply and gently guide the attention back to where you left off.

Releasing the focus from the hands, arms, and shoulders and returning to the breath. And deliberately shifting your attention to the neck, both the front and back. Noticing the jaw, another place where stress can be present. And if you do notice tension, see if you can soften it. Noticing the mouth, and where the tongue is positioned within it. Observing the sensations on breathing at the nostrils. Can you also notice the air as it flows through the back of your throat? And see if you can recognize any tension in the facial muscles - perhaps in the eyebrows or the forehead - and if so, allowing more ease into your experience if possible. And noticing each strand of hair on the top of the head.

Letting go of the focus on the neck, face, and head, and returning to the breath. Allowing the entirety of the body to be the focal point for the next few moments. Scanning the body as a whole and be with any experience that unfolds into your field of awareness - whether it's relaxation or tension, warmth or coolness, painful or pleasant feelings. Notice if your attention naturally goes to one particular area or multiple locations in the body, and make this your practice for the next few moments.

And as this practice comes to a close, taking a few deep breaths of gratitude for having spent this time strengthening your capacity for mindful awareness.