

Body Scan



The mindfulness practice of a body scan can help us tune into our emotions. The aim of a body scan is not to change how we feel or to become more relaxed. Rather, the goal is to become aware of how our bodies feel—just allowing ourselves to fully experience what is there, without judgment. You can do a body scan in any position, but sitting or lying down may be easiest. Find a comfortable location where you are unlikely to be disturbed. Inevitably, your mind will wander from

time to time during this practice. Gently acknowledge this, noticing what thoughts are coming to you and allowing them to pass you by, and then return your attention to the part of your body that you are focusing on.

-
- Close your eyes and take 3 easy breaths. Simply allow any waves of thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations to just be, without judgment. There is no need to analyze or figure things out. Just allow yourself to be present with the experience.
 - Now, shift your focus to your breathing. Breathe normally. Notice when you are breathing in and when you are breathing out. Notice the expansion of your chest and abdomen, and feeling of air moving through your nasal passage.
 - Gently remove awareness from your breath, and bring your awareness to the physical sensations of pressure where your body makes contact with the ground/chair/bed. With each breath, allow yourself to sink down further into the surface.
 - As you go through the body scan, you may notice areas that are tight or tense. Just let the sensations be. Also be mindful of any physical sensations and any thoughts or emotions that may arise. Allow them to flow over you.
 - Slowly shift your awareness to your left foot where it is making contact with the floor--the sole of the foot, or back of the heel. Feel your toes and the top of your foot and up into your ankle.
 - Slowly shift your awareness upward through your leg from your ankle into your calf and shin, feeling their connection to your knee, noticing the sensations of your skin, muscles, tendons and bones.
 - Now let your awareness move upward into the thigh, feeling the connection to your hip.
 - Now shift your attention away from your hip and become aware of your right foot where it is making contact with the floor--the sole of the foot, or back of your heel. Feel your toes and the top of your foot and up into your ankle.
 - Slowly shift your awareness upward through your leg from your ankle into your calf and shin, feeling their connection to your knee, noticing the sensations of your skin, muscles, tendons and bones.
 - Now let your awareness move upward into the thigh, feeling the connection to your hip.

Body Scan

- Allow your awareness to move up into your pelvis, being mindful of any sensations, thoughts, or emotions.
- Shift your awareness into your abdomen, noticing the sensations in your muscles—their softness or tension. Notice sensations deeper inside your body. Notice the feelings and movements in your gut.
- Move your awareness into your tailbone and begin to notice the lower, middle and upper parts of your back, feeling any sensations.
- Let your awareness move into your chest, noticing your breath and your heart, and any feelings of lightness or heaviness. Be present as you feel into your rib cage and sternum. Recognize any sensations, thoughts or emotions.
- Gently move your attention from your chest into the fingertips of your left hand. Feel into the fingers and palm, then the back of your hand and up into your wrist.
- Allow your awareness to move up your forearm, elbow, and upper arm and into your shoulder. Feeling the sensations of your skin, muscles, tendons and bones.
- Now shift your awareness into the fingertips of your right hand. Feel into the fingers and palm, then the back of your hand and up into your wrist.
- Allow your awareness to move up your forearm, elbow, and upper arm and into your shoulder. Feeling the sensations of your skin, muscles, tendons and bones.
- Let your awareness move into both shoulders and then into your neck and throat. Be present to any sensations, thoughts or emotions.
- Allow your awareness to move into your jaw, then teeth, tongue, mouth and lips. Feel into your cheeks and around your eyes. Notice the sensations, softness or tension.
- Let your awareness move into the top and back of your head, feeling into your ears and then the inside of your head. Recognize any sensations, thoughts or emotions.
- Expand your awareness to your whole body from head to fingertips. Feel your body as a whole, with all it's various sensations, thoughts and emotions.
- Breathe in, noticing how your whole body rises expands with the inhalation. Breathe out, noticing how your whole body and falls and contracts with the exhalation.
- Spend a few moments with awareness of your body as a whole.
 - Take 3 breaths and remind yourself that taking this time to be fully present to yourself is a gift.

