

Body Scan Meditation

This exercise asks you to systematically focus your attention on different parts of your body, from your feet to the muscles in your face. It is designed to help you develop a mindful awareness of your bodily sensations, and to relieve tension wherever it is found. The body scan can be performed while lying down, sitting, or in other postures. The steps below are a guided meditation designed to be done while sitting. This three-minute meditation was produced by UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC).

1. Begin by bringing your attention into your body. You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.
2. Notice your body wherever you're seated, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor, wherever.
3. Take a few deep breaths; as you take each breath, bring in more oxygen, enlivening the body. As you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.
4. Notice your feet on the ground. Notice the sensations of your feet touching the ground: the weight and pressure, vibration, or heat.
5. Notice your legs against the chair or ground: pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.
6. Notice your back: any sensation of contact with the chair, clothing, or air.
7. Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.
8. Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften.
9. Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.
10. Observe your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.
11. Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.
12. Then notice your whole body present. Take one more deep breath.
13. Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. And then when you're ready, you can open your eyes.