



Body scan meditation

Start the body scan meditation by finding a quiet place where you can lie on your back on a thick mat or other comfortable surface. Find a comfortable position that allows your legs to be stretched out and for your feet to be facing slightly away from each other. Keep your hands by your sides. You can close your eyes if it feels good to do that.

Now take a moment and notice how your body feels. Focus awareness on the parts of your body that are pressing against the floor. What do you feel in your heels? What do you feel in the backs of your calves and thighs? In your buttocks? Your upper back and shoulders? The back of your head and arms?

Now remember the purpose of this exercise. The purpose is to be aware of what is happening at each moment as you concentrate on each body part in turn. You don't need to do anything except feel the sensations of your body. You don't need to try and relax or calm down. Just try to notice all the body's sensations - whatever they might be - at every moment. Attempt to feel them instead of thinking about them. Do this in the gentlest manner possible.

Start by focusing on your diaphragm. Notice the feeling of your diaphragm when it moves, notice how it stretches slightly when you inhale. Notice how your diaphragm empties when you exhale. Feel the movements when you breathe in and out.

As the air leaves your body each time you exhale, let your body sink a little deeper into the floor. In the next part of the meditation, you will shift your attention like a spotlight on different parts of your body.

First move your attention from the diaphragm to your left leg and down to your foot. Then all the way to the big toe of your left foot. In a gentle way, notice how your big toe feels right now. You may feel tingling, pulsing or warmth. Or you might feel how it feels for your toe to touch something. Focus on what you feel at this very moment, regardless of what the sensation is.

Now shift your attention to your little toe. What does it feel like? Expand your attention to all the toes on your left foot. Perhaps you're aware of how it feels when your toes are touching each other? Or you're aware of the empty space between your toes? Regardless of what you notice, or even if you don't notice anything at all, be aware only of your experience and sensations at this moment.

Now when you inhale and the air flows into your chest, feel or imagine how the air continues down to your stomach, left leg and all the way down to your left foot and into your toes.

As you inhale, feel how the air flows from your nose all the way to the toes of your left foot. And as you exhale, feel or imagine how the air flows back up from your toes, through your leg, through your stomach and chest, and finally exits through your nose.

Now take a moment to inhale and try to breathe all the way down to your toes and then let the air flow back up from your toes when you exhale. It may take some time before you can follow the progress of breathing when you inhale and exhale. Practice this with a gentle, playful attitude.

When you're ready, take a slightly deeper breath that goes all the way down to your toes. When you exhale, release your attention from that area and shift it to the sole of your left foot.



Feel the ball of your foot. Perhaps you can feel its shape? Feel the arch, perhaps you can sense its curved surface? Now focus on the part where your heel is touching the floor. Examine how the sensation of touch and pressure feel. Try to be aware of all the sensations at this very moment.

Then shift your attention to your ankle. Perhaps you can feel the bones of your ankle and the skin tightening over the bone on the inner and outer part of your ankle?

Then focus your attention on the top of your left foot. Perhaps you can feel a sock or the air touching your skin? Keep your awareness focused on your whole left foot. You might be able to feel the many small bones that make up your foot.

When you're ready, feel or imagine how the air flows down to your left foot as you inhale. When you exhale, stop focusing on your whole left foot and release your attention from it.

Now focus on your lower legs. Start with the calf muscle and feel how it feels in those places where your calf presses against the mat or floor. You might notice a feeling of pressure or contact with the floor.

Shift your attention to the front of your shin. Notice your shin bone and how the skin tightens around the bone. Take a deep breath and direct breathing towards your shin and calf.

When you exhale, let your awareness shift from that body part to your left knee. Perhaps you can feel the kneecap and sides of your knee? And from the back of your knee all the way to the joint? What sensations can you observe? Perhaps you feel some warmth or dampness?

Don't worry if you notice your thoughts wandering during some part of the exercise – this is what thoughts do. When you notice your attention is no longer as focused on your body, just acknowledge the thoughts that you were having, and then continue with the Body Scan. Follow the instructions and continue scanning your body from the spot where you were before your thoughts wandered.

Now expand your attention to the whole upper leg, from the knee to the left hip.

Try focusing your attention directly on the thigh muscles. Perhaps you can notice the muscles and whether they feel soft or tight and tense? If you notice tension or resistance here or in some other body part, try using breathing to become directly aware of the tension. Use inhaling to approach the sensations in a friendly and curious way. Be aware of them and study them. Exhale and then let the tension fade away as much as possible. Don't try and force anything to happen, just let it happen naturally as you exhale.

Now see what happens when you do this for one or two breaths. When you're ready, take a slightly deeper breath all the way down to your whole left leg. When you exhale, release your attention from that body part.

Now direct your attention to the toes of your right foot. Notice all your toes at the same time. You can focus on the sensations in those places where your toes touch each other. Perhaps you can feel the shape of your toes and their joints? Perhaps even your toenails?

Now focus on the whole sole of your right foot. Feel the ball, arch and heel of your foot. Gently and curiously examine the sensations in those places where your heel is touching the floor. Perhaps you can observe pressure or contact? Or a feeling of heaviness?

Then direct your attention to the top of your right foot and ankle. Become aware of the sensations on the skin surface. Perhaps you notice some coolness or warmth? Also feel what's happening on the inner side of your foot. If you notice that your thoughts or sounds make your mind wander,



gently acknowledge them, and bring your attention back to what you're focusing on – the top of your right foot.

At a suitable moment, inhale all the way down. Breathe down to your right ankle and the top of your foot.

When you exhale from that body part, release your attention from the ankle of that foot and shift it to the right shin. Start by focusing on the front part of your shin. Perhaps you can feel the shin bone, feeling the strength and length of the bone.

Then shift your attention to the calf muscle and study the sensations on the muscle surface and inside it. Try to feel what you're experiencing at this moment. If you notice yourself thinking about what you experience, try to bring your attention back to what you're feeling, to what you're actually experiencing in your body.

When you exhale the next time, release your attention from the shin and shift it to your right knee. Let your awareness rest on your knee for a moment. When it feels right, let your awareness expand so that it covers the whole upper part of your right leg. Feel the whole area. Your thigh, the bone running through it and how it feels when your thigh is touching the floor.

Then focus only on what you feel inside the muscle right now. You might gently scan the muscle by focusing your attention on it. Use breathing to become aware of the sensations deep inside the muscle. If you notice tension in the muscle, let it fade away as much as possible when you exhale.

When you're ready, take a slightly deeper breath and let it flow all the way down and fill your whole right leg. As you exhale and breathe out of the right leg, completely release your attention from it.

Now focus your attention on the pelvic region, the whole area from one hip to the other. At this time, it's good to remember that you don't need to try and make anything happen. This exercise is not intended to change anything or achieve any specific state. You're only focusing on being aware of the experience just the way it is. No matter what it is.

Now direct your attention to the buttocks. Perhaps you can feel pressure in those places where your buttocks are touching the floor? Focus your attention on your genital area, notice the sensations in that area. And also notice if there are no sensations.

Then, for a couple of breaths, direct your breathing down to the whole pelvic area and then direct breathing out of the pelvic area – the whole way up and then out via your nose.

When you're ready, take a deep breath and when you exhale, release your attention from that area as you exhale. Let it fade away.

Now direct your attention to the lower back, especially the part where your back is connected to your pelvis. The muscles in this area are often tense, so you can let your inhaling lead your awareness directly to these muscles. Let your breathing push very gently into the muscles and scan them. Gently be aware of them and sense all possible tension in them. When you exhale, let the tension fade away as much as possible.

Don't worry if the tension doesn't fade away. This is just what you're experiencing at this moment.

Let your awareness expand to the lower back and how it feels pressing against the floor. You might notice how your lower back moves slightly when you inhale and exhale. When you're ready, take a deeper breath, breathe deep into your back and then let it out as you exhale.

Then shift your attention to the front of your body and the diaphragm. Focus on the physical sensations that you observe in this area. How the diaphragm rises when you inhale and how it falls



gently when you exhale. See if you can focus your breathing in this way and gently clarify your awareness.

If you notice yourself becoming tired and sleepy, you can always open your eyes until the drowsiness passes.

Now direct your attention to your chest and notice the feeling between your ribs when your chest rises each time you inhale and falls each time you exhale. If you want, you can try shifting your attention to inside your chest. Perhaps you can feel the movement of your lungs? How does your heart feel when it is beating and pumping blood all over your body?

And now when you inhale, focus on examining the breathing all the way from your nostrils to your chest. When you exhale, shift your attention away from the whole upper body, chest and stomach.

Direct your attention to your fingers – the fingers of your left hand and the fingers of your right hand. Focus on the very tips of your fingers. Fingertips are very sensitive. You can examine whether it's possible to gently clarify and sharpen the focus of your attention when you remain aware of your fingertips. Thoroughly and gently examine all the sensations in your fingertips at this very moment. Perhaps you feel some tingling or pulsing? Perhaps some coolness or warmth? Be aware of your fingers from every side. Also be aware of your palms. You might notice the grooves and folds in your palm, especially those that run close to your thumb and across your palm.

Then move to your wrists and see if you can feel the faint beating of a pulse.

Then focus on your forearm and sense everything that you feel in them at this moment. Be aware of your forearms. Perhaps you can feel the bone and how soft the skin is at the bend in your arm?

Then focus attention on your upper arms– on the left and the right. Concentrate on being aware of the sensations in your muscles, the biceps and the extensor muscle. Focus attention directly on the muscles and try to sense how they feel right now. Soft and relaxed? Or tight and tense? If you notice tension, direct your breathing there. Let the tension fade away as much as possible in a natural way, not forcing anything to happen.

Notice your armpits, and any sensations or lack of sensations in them.

Now focus on your shoulders. Feelings and tensions are often held in the shoulder muscles. Inhale again and let a gentle awareness push deep into the shoulder muscles. Gently study how tight or relaxed they feel at this moment. If you notice tension or resistance in the muscles, let as much of it as possible escape each time you exhale. Simply breathe through the sensations from your shoulder muscles.

When you're ready, take a deeper breath and direct your breathing over a larger area into your shoulders, arms and hands. And when you exhale, release your attention from this whole area.

Next focus your attention on the neck. How does your throat feel? Notice the air flow as it moves in and out of your throat. Relax your neck when you next exhale.

Now move upwards and focus on your face, another location in the body which holds feelings and tension. Start by focusing on the chin area, which stretches from the tip of your chin to your ears and jaws. Then focus your attention on the lips. Feel the sensations in your lips as they touch each other. Then shift your attention to inside the mouth and focus on your tongue. You may notice how it feels when your tongue touches your teeth and the roof of your mouth.

Become aware of your nose. Can you feel your nostrils at this moment? You might notice how the sensations change slightly when air flows in and out. Perhaps you can feel some tingling. Perhaps



you notice how the air temperature changes. The air might be cool when you inhale and warm when you exhale. You become aware of your eyes and eyebrows, the space between your eyebrows and the whole area around your eyes. Tensions are often stored in the muscles around the eyes. In a gentle and curious way, notice how that area feels right now and let the muscles soften.

Then focus attention on your temples and forehead. The muscles in this area can also hold tension, anger and frustration. Use your awareness to carefully observe how your forehead feels at this moment. What sensations can you observe? If you notice pent-up tensions, breathe through these sensations and let the tightness subside, fade away and soften on its own.

Be aware of the whole facial area as if your breathing was directed to your face from the inside. Breathe into your face, direct your breathing there. Imagine each breath you take in is refreshing and strengthening, each breath out is relaxing. Then take a deeper breath and, when you exhale, release your attention from the whole facial area.

When you're ready, shift the focus of your attention to the very top of your head, the scalp. Notice the sensations you feel there, if you feel anything at all. Let yourself pause for a moment and be aware of the scalp as you inhale and exhale. Try and let your awareness slowly and gently expand to the entire body so that you feel your body as a whole. Feel the movement of your breathing as you're lying there. Start from the scalp and let your awareness expand down to the face, neck, shoulders, both arms, the chest, back and stomach. Let your awareness expand down to your hips, pelvic region, down to the left and right thighs, knees, shins, feet and all the way to your toes. Now breathe and feel your entire body. Keep your experience in the present, in a state of open awareness so that you're aware of the sensations all over your body while simultaneously being aware of your breathing. Let your body lie there. Let your body be just what it is.

You can become aware of your own completeness. Let yourself be just what you are as you lie here. Rest in awareness – calmly from one moment to another.