

Feeling Exercise 2 - Mindfulness Body Scanning

You may want to lie on the floor on a mat making sure you are warm and comfortable, covering yourself with a blanket and resting your head on a cushion or pillow. You can also do this sitting upright. Taking care to ensure you will not be disturbed for the period of the body scan.

First checking in with your body just as it is right now noticing the sensations that are present, feeling the contact the body is making with the floor.

Then starting to scan the body, sweeping your awareness through different parts of the body, without judging what you are aware of but as best you can bringing attention to your experience moment to moment.

Starting with the crown of the head, noticing any sensations here, tingling, numbness, tightness or relaxation. Then including the head, feeling the weight of the head as it rests on the floor, then including in awareness the forehead, noticing whether or not you can feel the pulse in the forehead, whether there is tightness or ease. Then including the eyes, the nose, cheeks, mouth and chin and finally the ears including any sounds that you notice coming to the ears. Being aware moment by moment of the changing pattern of sensations, feelings of warmth, coolness, ease. If you notice your mind wandering then this is perfectly natural and what minds do. Noticing your mind has wandered is a moment of awareness, then just gently guiding your mind back to the part of the body you are focusing on.

Then letting go of the head and face, moving your awareness into the neck and shoulders, noticing the strong muscles in this part of the body, having awareness of any tension in the neck and throat, perhaps becoming aware of the sensation of air in the throat.

Moving your awareness now to the shoulders, the places where there is contact between the shoulders and the floor, stretching your awareness into the arms, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers, aware of what is here in each moment.

Shifting the focus now to the chest area, noticing the subtle rise and fall of the chest with the in and out breath, turning your awareness to the ribcage, front and back of the ribs, sides of the ribs, the upper back resting on the floor. Noticing any aches and pains here and seeing if you can bring a sense of gentleness and kindness to these areas.

Turning your awareness now to the abdomen and stomach, the place where we feel our 'gut feelings' noticing your attitude to this part of your body, seeing if you can allow it to be as it is, taking a relaxed and accepting approach to this part of the body. Then stretching your awareness to the lower back, the lumber spine, feeling the gentle pressure as the back meets the floor before moving your awareness to the pelvis area, the hip bones, and sitting bones, genitals and groin, noticing any sensations or lack of sensations that are here, perhaps being aware of the breath in this part of the body. Bringing a kindly attention here.

Now letting go of the torso as the centre of your awareness and moving your attention into the thighs of both legs, feeling the weight of the legs, gently noticing what other sensations there are here, tuning into the skin, bone and

muscle of the legs here. If your mind has wandered into thinking, planning, worrying, day dreaming then just gently guiding it back to this part of the body.

Next turning your attention gently towards the knees, bringing a friendly attention, notice if there is any discomfort here, and if there is none then noticing what is present already here.

Stretching your attention into the calves of both legs, noticing how your muscles feel here, feeling this part of the legs from the inside out, the flesh and bone of the lower legs. And again checking in where your attention is from time to time and noticing the quality of your attention seeing if it is possible to bring a gentleness and kindness into your awareness, not forcing yourself, bringing a lightness of touch to your attention in this part of the body.

Finally moving your attention into both feet, the heels of the feet, the instep, the balls of the feet, the tops of the feet, skin and bone and finally the toes, seeing if it's possible to distinguish one toe from another. Noticing whether there is tension here, sensations, numbness, tingling and allowing any tension to soften as you bring a gentle attention to it.

Now taking one or two deeper breaths and widen your focus, filling the whole body with awareness, noticing whatever is present, sweeping the body with your awareness from top to bottom, experiencing the body from the inside out. Noticing whether there is any non-acceptance towards any parts of the body as you fill the body with a gentle awareness and seeing if you can have compassion for any judgments or for any tensions or pain that might be present as and when you notice it. Feeling the energy of life flowing through you. And resting in awareness of this amazing body that you have, compassion for its pains and appreciation for its capacities and the wonder of it.

(Retrieved in September 2017, from mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/resources/the-body-scan/)