

Meditation for Beginners



A Mindful Body Scan Meditation

You can do the body scan exercise lying on the floor, a bed, or be sitting up in a chair. Choose somewhere that is comfortable for you, and ensure you are alert and unlikely to fall asleep.

“Tune into the body as a whole. Find that sense of touch where the body touches whatever you are sitting or lying on. Explore whatever sense of warmth, coolness, hardness or softness may be there.

Gradually tune into any sensations present in the body. Gathering your attention, allow it to settle more fully in the feeling of breathing at this moment. Take one or two deeper, more intentional breaths, getting a sense of the movement of air in the body, a sensation of the in-breath and out-breath, rising of the chest, or the feeling of gentle release on the out breath. Just focus on the experience, no right or wrong sensations, and just note we are not aiming for relaxation. Just whatever feeling is there moment by moment.

Let the breath come naturally and bring the attention to the toes and feet. Become aware of any sensations there might be, any pressure? Contact with the floor perhaps, or the clothes you are wearing? Maybe tingling or numbness, warmth or coolness? Sensations at the bottoms of the feet, your soles? Heels? Instep? Or at the top of the feet? If you are not aware of any sensations, that’s ok, just be mindful of the absence of any feelings.

Move your attention towards your ankles and notice any sensations present right now. Move your focus to the lower legs, shins, calves. Just become aware of sensations in the lower limbs at this present moment. Any contact with clothing? A sense of warmth or coolness, whatever there might be.

When the mind wanders, it’s not a mistake. Minds wander; it’s what they do. Just gently and kindly bring the mind back to the sensation in the lower legs.

Move your attention to the sensations at the knees. The front of the knees, the back of the knees, the sides of the knees.

Then move to the upper legs, thighs, tops of thighs, inside of the thighs and outside. Maybe notice any patterns of sensation throughout the area.

Letting go of the attention on the thighs, move your focus to the pelvic area, groin, hips, buttocks. Any contact here with the floor or seat, just sensing whatever is in the pelvic region at this moment.

Now move to the lower back. If you find there is any tension in the lower back, try breathing into it, letting it open, soften, and letting the tension move if it wants to. Staying with the sensation, if the mind has wandered just let your experience be what it is, and then gently, kindly bring your attention back to the lower back.

Move to the middle of the back, upper back and the shoulder blades. Just opening to whatever sensation there may be through the whole of the back.



When you are ready, move to the front of the body, chest, maybe feeling a gentle rising and falling with each breath. Move to the abdominal area, notice any movement of clothing or breath in the body.

Move to the hands, both hands together, starting at the tips of the fingers and thumb tips, and let the intention move into the fingers and thumbs, palms, backs of hands, wrists. Just notice whatever sensation, or not, there may be in the wrists right now.

Then arms, forearms, the upper arms, and then the shoulders. If you find you are holding any tension here, breath into it and see if it will soften. Bring your attention to neck, throat and coming to the face beginning with the jaw, cheeks, inside of the cheeks, tongue, teeth, lips, and nose maybe feeling air passing across the nose.

Coming to the eyes and eye area. The temples, forehead, and the rest of the head. Scalp and ears.

So, having scanned through the body, part by part, having a sense of the body as a whole, including the sensation of rising with the in breath and gentle release of each out breath. Bring this body scan to a close, just sitting or lying and taking whatever time you need until its right for you to move again.

Ending – when you are ready to end the meditation, bring your awareness back to the breath, your body and your surroundings, then slowly open your eyes. “

Try the 11-minute Guided meditation

How did you feel after the body scan exercise?

Did you feel that in some areas there was little or no sensation, or you felt there should be something? Were you surprised by any feelings that were present?

Do you keep falling asleep? That's not uncommon, or a problem, and sometimes quite refreshing, just pick up the practice where you left off. If you keep falling asleep, just try a different position, or coming back to the exercise at another time. Just keep experimenting to see what works for you, and with a little practice, you will find this much more natural.

Did you feel really fidgety? Again, sometimes we are not used to sitting so still, and with anxiety we can often feel restless or jumpy, fighting the urge to move, and feeling uncomfortable. Again, here you are trying to do it right. Try saying to yourself, 'Oh yes, I recognise the urge to move', and let it go. If you still find you want to move, then mindfully, just move. Again, there is no right or wrong way, just experiment until you find something that works for you.