

# THE BODY SCAN MEDITATION

The body scan is not for everybody, and it is not always the meditation of choice even for those who love it. But it is extremely useful and good to know about and practice from time to time, whatever your circumstances or condition. If you think of your body as a musical instrument, the body scan is a way of tuning it.

## SCRIPT:

When we practice the body scan, we are systematically and intentionally moving our attention through the body, attending to the various sensations in the different regions.

Before we begin this activity, you can choose to stand or sit on the floor, whichever you'd like. Start by bringing your attention into your body.

You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.

Notice your body seated or standing. Feel the weight of your body in your seat, or your feet firmly grounded to the floor. Stack your ribs over your waist, and your head and shoulders over your ribs so that your body is aligned.

Take a few deep breaths. Bring your attention to your breath. Feel your lungs expand and lift your ribs on the inhale and feel them relax and drop down again as you exhale.

As you continue to take deep breaths, bring in more oxygen to enliven your body. Notice it filling you up and giving you energy while also relaxing you. And as you exhale, hold on to that sense of relaxation throughout your body.

There might be moments throughout this activity where your mind wanders or your attention leaves your body. That's okay. Remind your thoughts where you want them to be and gently bring them back without judgment.

Notice your feet on the floor, the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, temperature. If you're seated, notice your legs and heels pressed into the floor. Maybe your hands are touching the floor too.

Bring your attention to your stomach area. Feel free to stretch your arms above your head. Expand your stomach and feel your muscles appreciate the stretch. Now relax your arms back down, notice any newfound softness around your stomach.

Notice your hands. Are they tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften. Take a moment to massage your hands, feel them warm up and release any tension they might have.

Notice your neck and shoulders. Are they tense? Release that stress by taking a deep, mindful breath and allowing them to soften. Maybe roll your shoulders forward a few times, and then backward. Take a moment to stretch your neck to one side and feel your opposite shoulder drop a bit more. Switch sides. Drop your head down and feel the back of your neck appreciate that stretch.

Notice the muscles in your face now. Are your temples tight? Your jaw? Scrunch up your face, make the weirdest face you can, and then relax. Feel your jaw loosen, your mouth might even fall open a little bit. You can do this a couple more times if that's helpful. If there is still tension in any part of your face, take a moment to massage them with your fingertips. Appreciate the relaxation and warmth you feel.

Now, open your eyes and take in the space around you.

What do you hear? What do you see? What do you feel?

What feelings or emotions does this bring out in you? Allow yourself to experience any emotions or thoughts you are having. Let them come in, and then feel them go past you. You don't need to become attached to these emotions. Let them go. You experience emotions, but you are **not** your emotions.

Reconnect with your breath again.

Deep breaths in.... And out.

Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a moment to appreciate the relaxation your body has given you, and the new energy you have. Take one more deep, energizing breath. And then when you're ready, stretch out your body one last time and come back to the group.