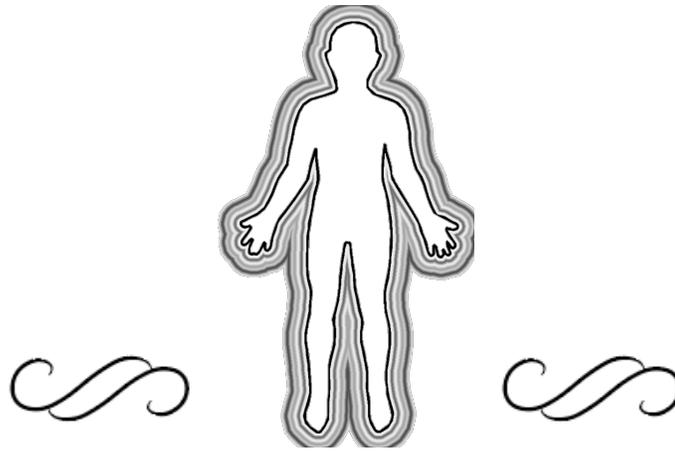


Body Scan Worksheet



Overview

When you're feeling stressed, it is common to "carry" this stress in your body in different shapes and forms: tense shoulders, a stomach "in knots", stiff neck and other joints, and pressure in the eyes and face. Through the Body Scan meditation, one is able generate awareness towards each part of the body sequentially; "to see how it is today — not to check in to change or judge the body, which we're apt to do, but just to experience it and see what's there." This in turn promotes wellness and increased awareness.

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7650123>

To perform this exercise:

- Position yourself in a comfortable, spread out position, preferable lying down or reclining on your back
- The purpose of this exercise is to take time on each body part, and generate non-judgmental awareness towards it. This can be done by noticing its temperature (hot, warm, cold), positioning in relation the rest of the body, any pressure or pain it feels, generally "how it is feeling", or by stretching or slightly repositioning it if needed.
- It is also possible to generate healing in areas of the body by generating focused attention to lightness, ease, and softness in these body parts. Try to generate this awareness as well as healing thoughts towards specific parts of the body, either by imagining them feeling better, or using a metaphor (light, wind, or anything that makes sense to you), and imagine it passing over these parts.
- Body parts to pay attention to:

- **Feet:** toes, pads and arch of feet, heels: notice any tension in the pads of your feet, or tightness in heels, stretch toes
- **Ankles and lower legs/calves:** stretch to aid tightness or aching
- **Knees and thighs:** notice any stiffness, aching or pain
- **Hips bones and muscles:** notice any tightness/stiffness, and aid by rotating legs and stretching hips outward and flattening
- **Lower back:** typically carries a lot of stress from the rest of the body. If there is pain/tightness, notice how this radiates to the mid-back, thighs, and knees
- **Stomach and abdomen:** lower stomach by hips, to the top of the rib cage. This area can carry tightness/pain as a result of stress
- **Lungs and upper chest:** can constrict and tighten when stressed; think around expanding
- **Spine:** can feel tight and constricted with stress. Try to stretch and picture elongating
- **Shoulders:** this is a major stress center in the body. Try to soften and picture looseness
- **Arms:** can often feel tightness and stress radiating from back and shoulders, try to lighten and put in resting position
- **Hands:** can often carry stress from writing, carrying, motioning, and positioning. Try to stretch out and leave limp and in comfortable position
- **Neck:** also major stress area in body along with shoulders. Try to stretch with hands, and hold in resting and “weightless” position
- **Face, Head:** carries a lot of stress from expressions throughout the day, practice stretches and how to leave in “resting position”
- **Dealing with discomfort:** the body is complex with many parts, and can hold stress and pain in many ways. As such, discomfort is a common experience when practicing body-centered awareness and meditation. In these practices, both emotional and physical discomfort can happen, and it is natural in these situations to want to escape or dissociate from it -- to change position or thoughts, to distract yourself, or to try to keep yourself from feeling it. Although effective in the moment, this technique serves as an immediate escape, and can evade awareness of the root causes behind the issue. Therefore, addressing the issue instead through acceptance and awareness is often more effective. One must be aware of the issue it and acknowledge it, but not cling to the idea of wanting to change it or make it go away. That being said, if any part of your practice causes any acute physical or emotional pain, please stop, and never feel forced to do anything that makes you uncomfortable.

Homework/Reflection

- How did body scan go? Did you notice any positive benefits? Were there any challenges? Did you notice anything unexpected?
- Did you come across anything difficult? How did you deal with it? Is there anything you would have changed about how you went about this exercise?
- What worked well?
- Did you notice your mind wandering during the exercise? What strategies did you use to bring yourself back to the present or to the task at hand?

Resources

Guided Body Scan Meditations (free on Youtube)

- Guided Body Scan Meditation #1 (30 min) (Jon Kabat-Zinn, UMass)
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DTmGtznab4
- Guided Body Scan Meditation #2 (15 min) (Esther, Eckhart Yoga)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmQOn1EIcH0>
- Guided Body Scan Meditation # 5 (15 min) (MindSpace)
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=48&v=CGC7qSqGuNw
- Guided Body Scan Meditation #3 (Linda Manning, Vanderbilt Osher Center for Integrative Medicine) (5 min)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xo3PetVUcIc>
- Guided Body Scan Meditation # 4 (5 min)(Stop Breathe & Think)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QS2yDmWk0vs>

Guided Body Scan Scripts

- University of Wisconsin Health Sciences Learning Center
 - <http://projects.hsl.wisc.edu/SERVICE/courses/whole-health-for-pain-and-suffering/Script-Body-Scan.pdf>
- Stillmind, Melbourne Mindfulness Centre
 - <http://www.stillmind.com.au/Documents/Body%20Scan%20Meditation%20orig.pdf>
- American Academy of Pediatrics
 - https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/Reaching-Teens/Documents/Private/Body_scan_handout.pdf