

## Body scan

Do the exercise lying on your back in a room where you feel good and where you can focus calmly on the exercise. You can lie on the floor, on a mat or on a bed. If you feel like it, you can close your eyes lightly.

Take a moment to listen to and feel your breathing. Notice the movement of breathing and the sensations in your body. When you are ready, focus on the physical feelings in your body. Focus in particular on the touch and pressure in the areas where your body touches the floor or bed: the heels, calves, buttocks, back, shoulder blades, the backs of your hands, the back of your head. Let go and sink deeper into the floor or bed with every exhalation.

Remind yourself of the purpose of the exercise. The purpose is not to change your feelings, calm down or relax. This may or may not happen. The purpose of the exercise is to focus your attention on any sensation you notice when you pay attention to each part of your body at a time, as well as you can right now.

Your attention is like a torch whose beam of light you point at a small area in the dark. Start by focusing the beam all the way to your stomach with your inhalation. Imagine that the air you just inhaled continues to travel from your stomach through your hip along your left leg to your left foot and all the way to the toes on your left foot.

Focus on the sensations in one toe at a time with curiosity. Examine the sensations you notice in your toes gently and curiously. Do you perhaps notice how the toes touch each other? Also make a mental note of not noticing anything special.

When you are ready, imagine that the air you inhale comes into your lungs during your inhalation, then passes through your stomach to your left thigh, knee, leg, ankle, foot and all the way to your toes. Then, as you exhale, imagine that the air goes back from your toes through your foot, ankle, leg, knee and thigh to your stomach, chest and out through your nose. Try to imagine breathing like this for a few breaths. As if you were breathing all the way to your toes. It may be difficult to imagine and do this. But keep practising – try breathing into your leg as best you can. You can approach the idea playfully and lightly.

If you find yourself starting to question or evaluate the exercise, just mentally note these thoughts and try to focus back on breathing into your leg. Such thoughts may be awakened, and they do not need to be eliminated. Just focus back on the exercise.

When you are ready, exhale and release your attention from your toes. Focus on the sensations in the sole of your left foot. Examine the sole, the ball of your foot and the heel gently and exploratively – notice the part where the heel touches the floor or bed. Try breathing to these sensations – observe your breathing in the background and primarily examine the sensations in the sole of your foot.

Let your focus expand to the whole foot. The ankle, instep, foot bones and joints. Maybe you notice what a sock or a trouser leg feels like against your skin. If you're barefoot, you may notice what air feels like on your skin. And now, focus entirely on your foot.

Perhaps you notice how the foot consists of many small bones. If you feel sleepy, you can open your eyes at any time and continue the exercise with your eyes open.

Keep focusing your attention on one body part at a time. The upper part of your left foot, the toes on your right foot, your right foot, your right leg, your hip area, your back, your stomach, your chest, your fingers, your hands, your arms, your shoulders, your neck, your head and your face. As best as you can, examine the different sensations in each area as minutely as

you did in your left foot. When you shift your focus from one area to another, try to breathe into that body part with your inhale and release your focus from it with your exhale.

If you notice tension in a body part, you can try to breathe into that part. Your inhale will help you focus your attention gently on these sensations, and you can try to let go of them with your exhale.

It is very likely that your mind will start to wander during the exercise. This is perfectly normal – that is what the mind does. When you notice that your mind is wandering, you can make a light mental note of where it has gone and then try to bring your focus back onto the body part whose sensations you were examining.

Finally, try letting your consciousness expand to your entire body. Start with the top of your head, let your attention expand to your face, neck, throat, shoulders, hands, chest, back, stomach, pelvis, hips, legs, feet and all the way to your toes. Let your experience be anything that it is. Examine carefully and gently what it feels like to be here and now and breathe. Notice your breathing all over your body. Give your own experience space and simply observe whatever you can observe.

Let your body lie here just as it is. You may be conscious of the feeling of being whole, intact.

Let yourself be just as you are, resting in your consciousness and the silence, moment by moment.

### **YouTube video of the exercise**

<https://youtu.be/AvUWS2gP-QI>



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