



Body Scan Activity

Supplies:

- Towel/mat/blanket/carpeted floor or comfortable chair

Background: This is a body scan intended for children/youth and should take 10-15 minutes depending on how much time you have. Body scans help bring calmness, attention, and appreciation to hectic daytime routines and can help youth relax and fall asleep at the end of a busy day.

What to Do:

Have youth get into a comfortable position, either laying on the floor or sitting in a chair. Then slowly, and with a calming voice, read:

1. **Lie down on your back.** Let your legs and your arms relax and fall to the sides. Settle yourself in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
2. **Start by taking two or three gentle, large breaths.** Pay attention to how that feels. Your belly rises and falls. Air moves in and out of your body. If you like, place a hand on your belly and feel it move with each breath.
3. **Now we're going to pay attention to the other parts of the body.** Start with your feet. They might feel warm or cold, wet or dry, relaxed or restless. It's also okay if you feel nothing at all. If you can, relax your feet now. If that's hard to do, that's fine. Take a moment and notice how that feels too.
4. **For these few minutes, let yourself be still.** There's nothing to do. Pay attention as best you can. You might feel a blanket or socks on your feet, or you might feel them pressing against the floor. When your mind gets busy, gently bring your attention back to your feet again.
5. **Now move your attention to your lower legs, noticing whatever is there.** Do they feel heavy, light, warm, cold, or something else? Let go of frustration and trying to do anything. Just do your best and give yourself a few moments of rest.
Next, move your attention next to your knees and relax them. Feel the front, back, and sides of your knees.
6. **After a few more breaths, move your attention to your upper legs.** Whatever you feel, or don't feel, is fine. Notice your legs and let them relax. If you feel restless or wiggly, that's okay too. That happens.
7. **Now move your attention to your belly.** It always moves when you breathe, rising and falling, like waves on the sea. You might feel something on the inside, like full or hungry. You might notice the touch of your clothing or a blanket. You might even feel emotions in your belly, like happy or sad or upset.

8. *If you feel that it's hard to focus, that's normal. Gently practice coming back again and again to how your chest feels when you breathe.*
9. **Next, bring your attention to your chest.** Notice it rising and falling as you breathe. If you feel that it's hard to focus, that's normal. Gently practice coming back again and again to how your chest feels when you breathe.
10. **Now turn your attention to your hands.** There is no need to move them or do anything with them. They may be touching the floor or somewhere on your body. Relax them if you can, and if not, simply paying attention to your hands for another moment.
11. **Move your attention up into your arms.** Maybe notice if you can find a moment of stillness inside you, like the pause at the end of each breath.
12. **Next, move your attention around to your back.** How does it feel against the chair or the floor? Notice how it rocks with each breath. When your mind gets busy or angry or scared, you can always come back to how your body feels in this way for a moment.
13. **Now move attention to your neck and shoulders, letting go and relaxing them.** If your mind wanders, that's fine. No one can pay attention all the time. Just keep returning to noticing your body whenever you find yourself thinking of something else.
14. **And now feel your face and head.** What expression do you have right now? What would it feel like to smile? What else do you notice in your face, your head, and in your mind?
15. **Finally, spend a few moments, paying attention to your whole body.** If it is easier, continue to pay attention to your breath. If it's time for sleep, let that happen, remaining still and continuing to pay attention to your breath or feelings in your body. And if it's time to wake up, open your eyes and sit for a few moments before deciding when to move again.

Reflection:

1. What were some physical sensations that you noticed during the body scan?
 - a. Possible answers: tight/loose, tingly, stiff/flexible, burning, numb, shaky, pounding, itchy, achy, light/heavy, cool/warm
2. What were some emotional reactions you noticed?
 - a. Possible answers: impatience, boredom, joy, anger, enjoyment, anticipation, pride
3. What are some thoughts that occurred?
 - a. Possible answers: reviewing the past, imagining the future, planning, analyzing, labeling, judging the experience, comparing

Source: Mindful.org