

Exercise sheet

BODY SCAN MEDITATION

ANCHORING YOURSELF IN YOUR BODY AND YOUR BREATH



i Before you begin, make sure you have 30 minutes free during which you will not be disturbed.

- Lie on your back with your arms by your sides and your palms facing up. Start by becoming aware of your breath, without forcing it, simply letting it be what it is. Bring your attention to the sensations you can feel in your nose, throat, lungs and belly with each inhalation and exhalation.
- Whenever your mind wanders away from your breath, note down in a corner of your head what you are thinking about, like on a Post-it note, without dismissing the thought, then bring your attention back to your breath. Do this as many times as necessary.
- If you feel tears welling up, welcome these emotions, don't try to control them. Don't be afraid.
- Now turn your attention to your toes. Examine all the sensations in your toes—tingling, friction, temperature—or no sensation at all.
- Then expand your attention to the whole of your feet—the soles, the instep, the heels, the ankles. Imagine that you are directing your breath into your feet. Then continue your exploration through your calves, shins, knees and thighs. Use your breath as a vehicle to explore your physical sensations. Remember, whenever your mind wanders, note down in a corner of your head what you are thinking about, then bring your attention back to your body. Then continue with your pelvis, stomach and chest, paying particular attention to the sensations you feel in your ribs as you inhale and exhale. Continue with your shoulders, arms, elbows, forearms, wrists. Continue with the palms of your hands, the backs of your hands, then along your fingers to your fingertips. Now bring your attention to your back, starting at the bottom and working your way up, as if your breath were scanning your back. Then examine the sensations in your neck, your skull, your ears your face. Now focus on your entire body. Feel the air flowing freely through your body, from your feet to your head and from your head to your feet, like a liquid, as if your whole body were breathing. If you feel more intense or painful sensations, explore them with as much compassion as you can. Envelop these sensations with your breath, then breathe into them. And, as best you can, with each exhalation, let go, welcome these sensations.
- Then come back to seeing your body as a whole. Do this for as long as it takes, and then, when you are ready... open your eyes.