

"Mindful Living" Video Series: Body Scan

"Mindful Living" video series

helps us integrate mindfulness into daily life

for enhancement of mental health

There are seven mindfulness practices tailored for elderly people

They are of different durations

some with more movement and some with less

Choose the practices that best suit your needs

and join us to experience the wonders of "Mindful Living"!

Hey, are you feeling okay?

Oh, it's nothing serious

Just a bit tight in my shoulders and lower back

I have chores to do every now and then

I don't feel it much while I'm doing them

But once I sit down, the discomfort starts to set in

Hmm, it's actually pretty common

because we rarely pay attention

to how our body feels

Sometimes we end up pushing ourselves too hard without realising it

Let's practise Body Scan together

It's a chance to tune in

and notice how our body feels right now

Before the mindfulness practice
there are a few things to keep in mind
Remember to watch this video first

We seldom notice the sensations
in different parts of our body
We tend to overlook
caring for our body
Only when we are stressed out or tense
will we become aware of
the tightness or discomfort in the body
Body Scan aims to
cultivate awareness of the body here and now
With a non-judgmental attitude
we explore curiously
the sensations in each body part
while embracing them with more gentleness and acceptance

This is the practice of Body Scan
For this practice
you may choose to sit or lie down
Find a comfortable and stable posture
If you are sitting on a chair

place your feet flat on the floor
Rest your hands gently on the laps
or on the armrests of the chair
Relax the shoulders
Keep the back naturally upright
Tuck in the chin slightly
and relax the facial muscles
If you are lying down on a bed
lie on your back
Place your hands by the sides
with your palms naturally facing upwards
Legs in a natural position
Once settling into a comfortable position
you may close the eyes completely
If you are sitting on a chair
you may also choose to lower your gaze
at a spot on the floor in front of you
Allow the body to settle down gradually
Tune in to the sensations throughout the body
being awake and at ease
Gently remind yourself
Body Scan is meant to
observe each and every body part
Whatever sensations arise

just feel them as they are

Bring kindness to that part

There is no need to change

or strive for any particular sensation

Just cultivate awareness of the body

here and now

Now, bring attention to your breathing

Feel the rise and fall of the abdomen

with every breath

Observe any body sensations that arise

with each breath

When you are ready

on an in-breath

bring attention to your feet

Observe your ten toes

the soles

the tops of the feet

the heels

the ankles

Any sensations right now?

For example, warmth or coolness, tightness or looseness

or a slight tingling sensation etc.

If there is no particular sensation

just acknowledge that there is the no sensation

Feel the sensations
in the feet with curiosity
On the next out-breath
let go of attention of the feet
and bring it to the calves
Notice the calves from the skin outside
to the muscles inside
and tendons and bones
any body sensations
Breathe in, breathe out
Let go of attention of the calves
and bring it to the knees
Bring attention from the skin to the muscles
joints
and ligaments
Notice any sensations here and now?
Breathe out
Let go of attention of the knees
and bring it to the thighs
Explore the sensations in the thighs right now
It may be the contact between your skin and clothing
the weight of thighs
any other sensations that arise
or no sensation at all

notice whatever is present

When you are ready

bring attention to the legs

Notice any sensations here and now

any contact

coolness or warmth

tightness or looseness

or any other sensations

Just allow them to be as they are

On the next out-breath

let go of attention of the legs

and bring it to the hips and pelvis

Feel the right hip then the left hip

from the outside to the inside

tuning in to the sensations of the whole pelvis

During the practice

if you notice any slightly intense sensations

in a particular body part

say, tension

you could breathe in

and send your breath to that area

and breathe out

Observe any changes in body sensations

Breathe out

Let go of attention of the hips and pelvis
and bring it to the back
Starting from the lower back
explore any sensations there
On an out-breath
expand the attention to the middle of the back
then to the upper back and across the shoulder blades
Notice all the sensations in the back in this moment
Breathe along with the back
Breathe out
Let go of attention of the back
and bring it to the front of the body
to the abdomen
Feel the rise and fall of the abdomen
as you breathe in and out
During the practice
you may notice that your mind gets carried away
by thoughts or emotions
and no longer pays attention to the body
A wandering mind is not a fault
Just acknowledge that your mind has wandered away
and then gently bring it back to
the body part you are observing
that is, the sensations in abdomen while breathing

On the next out-breath

let go of attention of the abdomen

and bring it to the chest

As you breathe

are there any sensations or changes in the chest?

Breathe out

Let go of attention of the chest

and bring it

to the hands and arms

With curiosity, observe your ten fingers

the palms

back of the hands

the wrists

Any feelings of warmth or coolness

the pulse

or other sensations?

Bring attention to the forearms

elbows

upper arms

Any body sensations right now?

Breathe out

Let go of attention of the hands and arms

and bring it to the shoulders and neck

Any body sensations there right now?

Tightness or looseness

or any other sensations

Breathe along with them

Breathe in and breathe out

Let go of attention of the shoulders and neck

and bring it to the head and face

Notice the sensations in your facial muscles

from the chin to the lips, nose, cheeks

and then to the ears

Then to the eyes, eyelids, eyebrows

forehead, and then to the temples

Notice the sensations of the entire head

the skull, the scalp and the hair

Notice the sensations of the contact between the back of the head and the hair

and sensations where the air contacts

the head and the face

Slowly expand the attention to the entire head

Notice any sensations in the head

On the next out-breath

slowly expand the attention

from the head

to the entire body

Breathe in and breathe out naturally

Bring an open awareness

to be with the whole body

Again, notice the body sensations while lying or sitting down

Allow the body to be just as it is here right now

Feel the whole body as full and complete

Rest in awareness moment by moment

This practice is coming to an end

When you are ready

while maintaining awareness of the body

gently open your eyes

or lift your gaze

Look around the surroundings

Gently move your hands and feet

Stretch your body

Notice any changing body sensations from moment to moment

Bring this expanded awareness of the body

to nurture yourself with compassion and kindness

If I fall asleep during practice

what should I do?

Maybe you really need a rest

Try to be kind to yourself

You could also explore ways to help yourself

be more attentive during the practice

For example, practise with your eyes open

or in a sitting position

Alternatively, you may choose a time

when you feel more awake

for instance, in the morning

During the practice

I noticed mild numbness in my hands and soreness in my lower back

What should I do?

You may choose to bring attention

to the body part that feels uncomfortable

Notice the changes in the body sensations

See if you can allow these sensations

just be there for a while

Alternatively, you may choose to

slowly adjust your posture mindfully

See if you can respond to

the needs of your body

You may also bring the attention

back to your chosen anchor

that is the body, the breath, or the sound

and continue the practice

If you have any other questions about the mindfulness practices

visit the website of Elderly Health Service for more information