

Body Scanning

In practicing the body-scan technique, you let go of expectations or any pre-formed ideas of your body~ even ones formed from the previous body scan~ and you become aware of what IS. When you continue to practice the body scan, the experience of “tuning into your body” becomes more familiar. Each scan area is still going to “feel” different. During the body scan, we take the time to step away from these expectations, judgment or comparisons.

Review of Body Scan Basics

In week 2 of our Mindfulness program we went over body scan basics and the specific technique to focus on for the first few weeks. This section is going to contain some of the same aspects of week 2 section “Why We Do It,” because the principles laid out in that section are very important in making the body scan your own. The very first principles of making the body scan your own are *focus* and *acceptance*. Let’s review these two principles:

- † **Focus** ~ This focus is based in awareness. Try to keep the focus inward and the mind quiet. Think of a paintbrush gently stroking a canvas, not with too much force or heavy effort, but enough to be consistent and relatively undivided. It may be difficult to keep focus if there is a lot going on or if there is pain in the body~ gently return the focus to the body part. Expect the mind to wander, with practice it will be easier and easier to bring the mind and focus back into the body scan.

- † **Acceptance** ~ This acceptance means that whatever is felt or noticed in your body is *okay*. This may mean you don’t actually *feel* or *notice* anything~ and that’s okay. This acceptance is a *non-judgmental bystander*. In each moment~ notice the breath and the body part being focused upon. In accepting what is happening in your body, you are allowing yourself to be *you*.



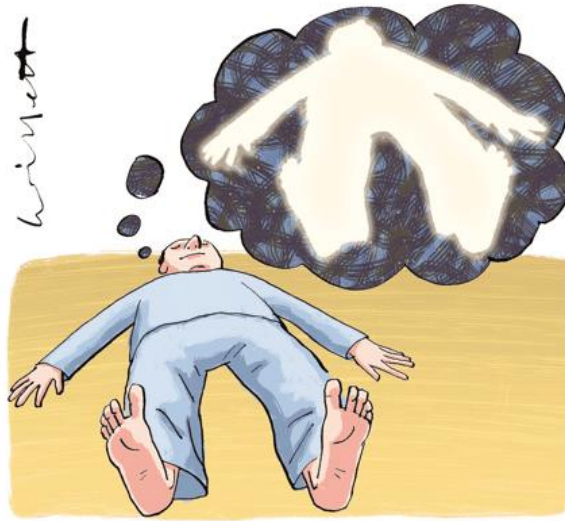
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Kabat-Zinn, Jon. "Chapter **WHAT**" *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*. New York, NY: Pub. by Dell Pub., a Division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Pub. Group, 1991. N. pag. Print.

Making the Body Scan Your Own

Just as described in week 2, the body scan usually begins lying on your back. If you cannot lie on your back, you can do your body scan in which ever position you feel comfortable. Now that you're in this position, the body scan will go through regions of the body with focus and acceptance.

Allow your eyes to gently close or come to a relaxed half gaze. Observe your breath, as it moves in and out of your lungs ~ your stomach rising and sinking with the breath. Recognize your body as whole, with your skin surrounding you and acting as your connection to the environment around you. Notice all sensations and input from what your body is resting on.



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Now make this your own body scan. In week two we traveled from the left foot upward to the head. This is your opportunity to decide how, and in what direction you would like to scan your body. This may allow you to become aware of things you may not have noticed otherwise.

You can choose to start from your head, traveling downwards towards your toes. You can begin from your heart and radiate outwards towards your fingers and toes. Notice that your body can feel very different just by the direction you choose to take. We encourage you to try many directions in the coming weeks to find your most favorable options.

Make an effort to carry out this exercise two to three times a week for five minutes. If think you do not have enough time – even simply focusing on the body with acceptance for 30 seconds to a minute can be beneficial.