

## Beginner's Guide to Body Scan Meditation

Try this meditation practice to relax your body from head to toe. Some possible benefits of body scan meditations include reduced anxiety, improved sleep, decreased pain, and greater self-awareness.

It is recommended you allow 30 minutes to investigate this practice. If you do not have time, try and take out 5-10 minutes each day to complete this practice. You can complete this practice sitting up or laying down flat on your back.

1. Begin by making yourself comfortable. Sit in a chair and make your back straight but keep your shoulders relaxed. Place your feet on the ground and gently close your eyes. Your hands should be rested on your lap.
2. Bring awareness to your breath. Take several long deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Notice your chest dropping with every exhale and chest rising with every inhale. Feel the heaviness of your body against the chair.
3. Let go of the noises and distractions around you as you continue to breathe in and out. If you become distracted, bring your attention back to your breath.
4. Now take a deep breath in and bring your attention to your feet, how do they feel? Wiggle your toes and feel your toes against your socks or shoes. Imagine your breath making its way towards your toes –as if your body is traveling through the nose to the lungs and through your stomach all the way down to your feet. Notice any sensations such as pressure, tingling, and tension in your feet. Your attention may wander during this process but try and bring yourself back to your breath each time it does. Imagine your feet dissolving into the ground and release any tension you feel in your feet.
5. On the next breath in, move to the sensations in your legs, lower back, and pelvis. With every breath out, let go of any tension you are carrying. Soften your body and continue to take breaths slowly in and out.
6. Bring your attention to your stomach and all the internal organs here. Feel your clothing against your skin or the sensation of your belly rising and falling with each breath. As you continue to breathe, bring awareness to the chest and heart region and notice your heartbeat. Observe how your chest falls with every exhale and rises with every inhale. On the next exhale, bring your attention to your hands. Again, channel your breathing into and out of this area as if you are breathing into and out of your hands.

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7. Bring your focus to your arms and shoulders. Observe the sensations there and feel the difference in each arm. As you take a breath out, soften your arms and release the tension you hold in them. Now bring your attention to you neck, shoulders and throat. Notice any tension in these three areas. You may be feeling tightness and rigidity in this area. As you breathe, let go of the tension you feel and dissolve your body against the chair or ground.
8. In the next exhale, shift your focus to your head and face. Observe the sensations in this area. As you exhale, soften any tension you feel in your face or head.
9. Bring your attention back to your entire body from head to toes. How do you feel? Feel the rhythm of the breath as it goes through your body.
10. Take a couple of slow, deep breaths as you come to the end of this practice. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and return your attention to the present moment.

