

BODY SCANNING AND LETTING GO OF TENSION

Body Scan

Close your eyes. Become aware of your breathing....Feel the air move into your nose, mouth, and down your throat into your lungs. Focus on your body starting with your toes and scan up your body, while asking yourself, "Where am I tense?" Be aware of the muscles in your body that are tense.

Note that all muscular tension is self-produced. At this point, be aware of any life situation that may be causing tension in your body and what you could do to change it. Perform the body scan *at least four times a day*.

Deep Breathing

1. Find a comfortable position.
2. Scan your body for tension.
3. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest.
4. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen to push up your hand as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should move only a little and only with your abdomen.
5. When you feel at ease, *smile*, and inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, making a quiet, relaxing, whooshing sound like the wind as you blow gently out. Your mouth, tongue and jaw are feeling relaxed. Take long, slow, deep breaths that raise and lower your abdomen. Focus on the sound and feeling of breathing as you become more and more relaxed.
6. Give yourself permission to deep breathe as long as you feel you need.
7. When you are ready to end your deep breathing session, take a little time to once more scan your body for tension. Compare the tension you feel at the conclusion of your special time with that which you experienced when you began.

Meditation

As you deep breath in and out focus on a word, phrase, or affirmation: i.e. one, relax, peace, I can do it, I will succeed, I am important.

Visualization

After scanning your body, deep breath in and out and focus on the areas of tension. These areas are now the color red. As you deep breath more and more you see the red color fading to a pale blue color.

Autogenics

While deep breathing repeat to yourself:

My right arm is heavy

My left arm is heavy

Both of my arms are heavy.

My right leg is heavy

My left leg is heavy.

Both of my arms and legs are heavy and warm.

(Repeat as needed)

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (tense for 10 and relax for 15)

Get in a comfortable position. Start with deep breathing and a body scan.

1. Curl both fists, tightening biceps and forearms. Relax
2. Wrinkle the forehead. Relax. Now wrinkle up the muscles of your face like a walnut; frowning, eyes squinted, lips pursed, tongue pressing the roof of the mouth, and shoulders hunched. Relax.
3. Arch back as you take a deep breath in the chest. Hold. Relax. Take a deep breath, pressing out the stomach. Hold. Relax.
4. Pull feet and toes back toward face, tightening shins. Hold. Relax. Curl toes, simultaneously tightening calves, thighs and buttocks. Relax.

Accepting Yourself

Follow through with deep breathing and a body scan.

Make these suggestions to yourself: " I let go of shoulds. ...I accept myself for all my humanness...I breathe, I feel, I do the best I can."

You can rewrite this mantra in any way that feels more authentic or true for you as long as it carries the basic message that you accept yourself..