

March DIY Exercise

KEY: HEALTH

EXERCISE: BODY SCAN

This exercise is divided into three parts, based on three different parts of the body: the lower body, the upper body and the head. To prepare, sit comfortably in a chair with your feet on the floor. Choose a place that is quiet and where you wouldn't be interrupted. You will need 15-20 minutes to do the exercise. The exercise is best done with closed eyes, so before you start with the mental body scan, close your eyes and take some deep breaths. Do this exercise weekly. (if you can do it more than once a week it will be beneficial for you).

Step 1: Become Aware of Your Lower Body

Spend about 5 minutes on this first step. As you sit in the chair, begin to feel how your feet touch the ground. Be aware of the contact that they make with the floor beneath you. Notice how your feet feel. Start with the toes, then bring your attention to the soles of your feet, up through to the ankles. Are your feet tired? Do your soles hurt from a busy day? Or are they perhaps rested, and they feel just fine? Do they feel cold or warm? At this point you might get distracted by different thoughts or emotions. Gently accept that maybe you're thinking about something you need to do; acknowledge and release the thought, then return to focusing on your feet. In the places where you feel tension or discomfort, just breathe in and as you exhale, slowly release the tension and breathe through the discomfort.

Next, bring your awareness above your feet, to the lower parts of your legs. Be aware of any sensations that you might experience there. Is it tingly or stiff? Does it feel energized? Or does it feel heavy? Slowly move your attention to your knees. Feel how the back of the knee touches the chair that you sit on. How do your knees feel? Keep on moving your focus upwards and feel your thighs. How do they feel? Do you feel like you need to strengthen them with some exercise? Feel the sensation of your thighs touching the surface of the chair. Do you suddenly feel as if you need to move your legs and feet, or even get up from your seat? If your mind starts wandering around, gently bring your attention back to doing the exercise. Move your attention to your pelvic area and buttocks. Be aware of how your body makes contact with the chair. In the places where you feel any tension or discomfort, just breathe in and as you exhale, slowly release the tension and breathe through any discomfort.

Step 2: Become Aware of Your Upper Body

Spend 5 more minutes on this step. Start with your torso. Feel your stomach. How does it feel? Is it calm or is it nervous? Is it making any noise? Maybe you realize that you feel slightly hungry. Notice any sensation that might be there, no matter how small. Then, move your attention to the lower back. Feel how it touches the back of the chair. The lower back is one of the body parts that may accumulate tension and tiredness. How does your lower back feel? Does it hurt? Is it relaxed? Does it feel strong or weak? Is it throbbing, numb, or achy? If you feel any tension or negative sensation just breathe in and breathe out. Accept whatever sensations your lower back might be experiencing at the moment and keep doing the exercise. If your mind starts to get distracted, gently shift your focus back to your body.

Continue upwards, scanning the front and the back of your chest. Feel how the upper back makes contact with the surface of the chair. Feel how your whole back supports your body on the chair. What sensations can you feel? If you start thinking about other things, just be aware of it and gently bring your

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attention back to the body. Now, bring the awareness to your hands. Start with the fingertips, through the fingers, through to the palm of your hands. Be aware of any sensations that you may feel. Are your hands resting in your lap or on the chair? Feel the contact between your hands and forearms and your lap or the chair. Move your attention up towards your forearms, through your elbows and the upper part of your arms.

Step 3: Become Aware of Your Shoulders and Head

Spend 5 minutes on this step. The shoulders and the neck are parts of the body that often becomes tense because of stress. Bring your attention to the shoulders and the muscles of the neck. Be aware of how that region feels. Do you have tension in your muscles? Do you have neck pain because you were sitting in a chair throughout the whole day in your office or at the computer? Move your attention up to your head. Be aware of your chin, your mouth, your nose, your eyes and then your ears. Do you have any physical sensations or any type of tension? Be aware of how your head feels. Do you perhaps have a headache? Or does it feel relaxed and energized?

Step 4: Write Down Your Experiences

Use the outline of the human body to write down where in the body you had the most notable physical sensations, what parts were the tensest or the most relaxed or had any pain or discomfort. This step provides better insight into how the exercise went. Maybe you will discover that some parts of your body were tense even if you hadn't realized this before. When you do this exercise, you may realize that you repeatedly have tension in a certain part of the body, and that you hadn't realized that before!

Area of Focus Step 1 Feet (toes, soles), ankles, legs, knees, thigh, pelvic area

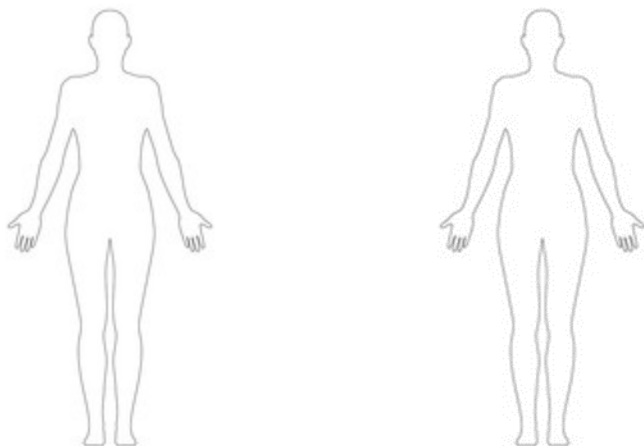
Step 2 Stomach, lower back, chest, upper back, hands, elbows, arms

Step 3 Shoulders, neck, face (chin, mouth, nose, eyes, ears), head

Duration 5-6 minutes each area

BODY SCAN –HUMAN BODY OUTLINE – FRONT & BACK

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BONUS TIP- Level Up!! Look up in Louise Hays' *You can Heal Your Life*, any areas of discomfort, pain or tension in your body.