

I'm Tense and Don't Even Know It - Get to Know Your Own Body



This body scan can help you connect with your body and the signals it gives you. This connection will also help you tune into tensions throughout your day so you can relax your shoulders when they are hunched or soften your jaw when it is clenched. This meditation is usually done lying down with pillow underneath your knees to support your back. Done before bedtime, it can be extremely relaxing.

Take a few deep breaths and close your eyes. Follow your breath. When thoughts distract you, simply come back to the breath. Begin to simply observe the body. If you become uncomfortable, pay attention to it; breathe into that part and shift, if necessary. If sensations become too uneasy to focus on, lean into them then come out when it's too intense. Invite in tenderness and kindness.

Now, start feeling the breath in your abdomen, maybe putting your hands on your belly to feel the rising and falling.

Sink into the floor or mat and let it support you. Feel the sensations in each body part and you flow your breath in the body, starting at the toes, then the bottom of the feet. Notice any tingling sensations in your feet. If you quiet the mind, and really tune in, you can feel it. If you feel no sensation, that is okay, too; just breathe and don't let your mind wander into stories.

Now focus on your calves, thighs and bring your legs into your awareness. Feel your tailbone connecting with the ground then your abdomen, chest, back. Feel your lungs breathing. Be responsive to what is present as you shift your attention up your body. When you feel tension, breathe into the area and send it compassion.

MINDFUL MANTRA: "WHEN I AM STRESSED, I WILL PAY ATTENTION TO MY BODY AND RELEASE THE TENSION."

End with your neck, relaxing your shoulders, face, jaw and eyes. Just notice then broaden your attention to your whole body. Now repeat this affirmation: "When I am stressed, I will pay attention to my body and release the tension." When you hear the sound of the bell, slowly stretch, turn to your left side and get up slowly.