

Relaxing and Scanning the Body

Calming the Mind:

Focus your attention on your breathing. Breathe naturally. Become present in the moment and place where you are. Just focus the mind on the rising and falling of your shoulders and chest as you inhale and exhale gently. Allow your mind to settle and become calm and present, ready to engage in meditation.

Motivation:

Create an altruistic motivation for the meditation session. Think that you are meditating not just for your own individual benefit, but you are taking the time now to meditate and develop your mind to become a wiser and kinder person, able to be of benefit to all beings.

The Main Body of the Meditation:

Focus your attention on your physical body. Find the most suitable sitting position for meditation, with your spine straight and erect, a position in which you can be aware and awake, but not stiff or rigid.

Focus your attention on the top of your head. Move down slowly through the head, the skull, the back of the head, the ears, releasing any tension in your brow. Move down through your face, checking the jaw to see if you're holding or clenching any tension there. Just keep a normal, natural breath moving through your system while you do this. Each time you exhale, just relax a little bit more into this posture letting go any tension, any anxiety.

Moving down through the neck and shoulders, where a lot of our tension is stored, checking these areas. And down through the arms, elbows and wrists, and the hands and fingers, letting go of anything you're holding there.

Move down through your torso, releasing any tension from your back, your chest, just breathing into it. Your waist and your hips, your buttocks, releasing the tension in your thighs, your knees, just breathing into any discomfort you may feel there, expanding the space that is there. Release any tension in your legs, your ankles, and feet and let go all the way out through your toes.

Take a moment now to focus on the lower most part of your body that comes into contact with your cushion or a chair. And feel the substance of your body as it makes that contact. Feel the weight and substance of this physical form.

Note places where one part of your body is touching another. Note any discomfort you may feel in your body. Just notice this; there's no need to fix things, or have judgments or opinions; we are just noticing as we scan the body. And as you notice, you can see if you can bring a bit more relaxation, a bit more of the breath, into those places.

You can note your breathing. The movement of the abdomen or the chest as the air is moving in and moving out. Notice the curve of the arms, the shoulders, the body.

Relax and take a deep breath. Release any lasting tension.

Dedication:

Finally, dedicate your positive energy and insights to the well-being and happiness of all living beings.

N.B.

As you engage in this exercise, you can learn much about your mind and your body and how they can work together. You may notice differences in your mind's tone or character when you are focusing on different parts of the body, e.g., a lighter, airy tone when focusing at the crown, or a more grounded, stable character when focusing at earth level. These insights may be useful in managing your own mental states.