

## Body-Scan Meditation Transcript

This is Susan Bauer-Wu.

When you're ill, in pain, or have any kind of physical limitation, it's tempting to want to push those sensations away or try to ignore your body. But no matter what is going on with your health, it is possible for you to feel whole. The body-scan meditation is an excellent way to learn to tune in and make friends with your body exactly how it is.

The body-scan involves developing awareness by slowly, gently, and systematically scanning the different regions of your body. This will help you develop attention and flexibility to be with *whatever* you are feeling with more self-acceptance.

Before we begin, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, throughout the practice, try to maintain a receptive and curious attitude.

You'll let your attention linger on each area of your body before moving on. As you do, you might imagine breathing in vitality or energy or healing. Or, you could imagine breathing out tension, tiredness, or stress.

You may sense resistance while scanning some areas of your body, while other areas may pull your attention. As gently as you can, bring your awareness to either the resistance or to the sensation calling you. You might imagine breathing into and out of them. If you need to, mindfully reposition your body into a more comfortable position. Then resume the body scan, returning to whatever part of the body you were focused on last.

Finally, if you feel sleepy, or even fall asleep, it's OK. It just means that your mind and body let go enough to drift off and give you needed rest and recuperation. The moment you catch yourself in a stupor, open your eyes and take a deep breath to reawaken, shift your position a bit, and return your attention to the area of the body that you last remember. If you are sleepy, you may find it helpful to do the practice with your eyes open with a soft gaze.

Let's begin.

Settle into a comfortable position, either lying down or seated in a way that you feel supported and relaxed yet alert. You may choose to cover yourself with a blanket, as body temperature often drops when you're still for a period of time.

When you're ready, close your eyes or keep them slightly open with a soft gaze.

Rest for a few moments allowing your attention to follow the natural rhythm of your breathing.

Once your body and mind feel settled, bring your awareness to your body as a whole. Notice it resting and being supported by the mattress, floor, or chair. Continue with your natural breathing, just noticing your body being held and supported.

Begin to “scan” your body with your awareness, letting your attention linger briefly on each area, taking note of any sensations you may feel there.

Start with the toes of your left foot, and then move to the other parts of the foot: sole, the heel, the top of the foot. Move your awareness up your left leg — lingering as you go, noticing any sensation — continuing all the way up to your pelvis.

If any thoughts or judgments come up, try not to get into a conversation with yourself about them. Just notice the thought or feeling, maybe smile to yourself and say, “Isn’t it interesting that I would think of that?” Then take a breath and bring your awareness back to the body.

Bring your attention now to your right toes, and then to the rest of your foot — the sole, the heel, the top. Continue scanning up your right leg — the ankle, calf, knee, thigh — all the way to your pelvis. If you notice sensation along the way, see if it changes. Maybe it gets stronger, or less intense, or dissolves completely. You might also notice that some sensations feel pleasant, some are neutral, and some unpleasant or uncomfortable.

Now bring your awareness to your abdomen, breathing in and breathing out. Then move to your low back, your upper back, your chest, your shoulders.

Move your attention down your right arm, all the way to your fingers. Notice any sensation in your hand — in the palm, the top of your hand, the wrist. Perhaps tingling, warmth, or other sensations. Gradually scan all the back up the arm to your shoulders.

Now scan your left arm, moving all the way down to the fingers, noticing any sensation there. Notice your hand, your wrist, your forearm, elbow, back up to the shoulder.

Move your awareness up to your neck, letting it linger, noticing sensation ...

... and up to your head — the top of your head, the back, the sides, around your ears. And move now to your face. With your awareness, slowly scan each area of your face: your forehead, brow. Soften the forehead and brow. Now your eye-sockets, nose, cheeks, and jaw. Relax your jaw. Now your lips, the inside of your mouth, your tongue and teeth. Lingering over each area, exploring, just noticing.

Finally, extend your awareness out to your body as a whole. Allow your awareness to take in the sensation of your whole body, breathing in and breathing out.

When you feel ready, you can open your eyes and bring awareness to your surroundings.