



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

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Grounding Exercises

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Meditation

Visualization

Guiding Imagery



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Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation exercises are relaxation techniques that involve progressively tensing and then relaxing muscles or muscle groups.

By tightening a muscle and then releasing, you can feel the difference between tense and relaxed. Actively engaging in progressive muscle relaxation exercises effectively loosens and relaxes the muscles.

Make sure not to do any movements that cause pain. If any of these exercises causes discomfort, ease up or stop to ensure that you do not cause muscle cramping or injury.

Sometimes if you are very tense already, actively tensing your muscles with progressive muscle relaxation exercise will not be helpful. If this is the case, you may want to try passive progressive muscle relaxation exercises instead.

Start reading the guided progressive muscle relaxation exercise script here:

Begin by finding a comfortable position sitting, standing, or lying down. You can change positions any time during the progressive muscle relaxation exercises to make yourself more comfortable as needed.

The first progressive muscle relaxation exercise is breathing. Breathe in forcefully and deeply, and hold this breath. Hold it...hold it... and now release. Let all the air go out slowly, and release all the tension.

Take another deep breath in. Hold it.... and then exhale slowly, allowing the tension to leave your body with the air.

Now breathe even more slowly and gently... breathe in....hold....out....

..breathe in...hold...out...

Continue to breathe slowly and gently. Allow your breathing to relax you.

The next progressive muscle relaxation exercise focuses on relaxing the muscles of your body.

Start with the large muscles of your legs. Tighten all the muscles of your legs. Tense the muscles further. Hold onto this tension. Feel how tight and tensed the muscles in your legs are right now. Squeeze the muscles harder, tighter... Continue to hold this tension. Feel the muscles wanting to give up this tension. Hold it for a few moments more.... and now relax.



Let all the tension go. Feel the muscles in your legs going limp, loose, and relaxed. Notice how relaxed the muscles feel now. Feel the difference between tension and relaxation. Enjoy the pleasant feeling of relaxation in your legs.

Now focus on the muscles in your arms. Tighten your shoulders, upper arms, lower arms, and hands. Squeeze your hands into tight fists. Tense the muscles in your arms and hands as tightly as you can. Squeeze harder.... harder..... hold the tension in your arms, shoulders, and hands. Feel the tension in these muscles. Hold it for a few moments more.... and now release. Let the muscles of your shoulders, arms, and hands relax and go limp. Feel the relaxation as your shoulders lower into a comfortable position and your hands relax at your sides. Allow the muscles in your arms to relax completely.

Focus again on your breathing. Slow, even, regular breaths. Breathe in relaxation.... and breathe out tension..... in relaxation....and out tension.... Continue to breathe slowly and rhythmically. Now focus on the muscles of your buttocks. Tighten these muscles as much as you can. Hold this tension..... and then release. Relax your muscles.

Tighten the muscles of your back now. Feel your back tightening, pulling your shoulders back and tensing the muscles along your spine. Arch your back slightly as you tighten these muscles. Hold.... and relax. Let all the tension go. Feel your back comfortably relaxing into a good and healthy posture.

Turn your attention now to the muscles of your chest and stomach. Tighten and tense these muscles. Tighten them further...hold this tension.... and release. Relax the muscles of your trunk.

Finally, tighten the muscles of your face. Scrunch your eyes shut tightly, wrinkle your nose, and tighten your cheeks and chin. Hold this tension in your face.... and relax. Release all the tension. Feel how relaxed your face is.

Notice all of the muscles in your body.... notice how relaxed your muscles feel. Allow any last bits of tension to drain away. Enjoy the relaxation you are experiencing. Notice your calm breathing.... your relaxed muscles.... Enjoy the relaxation for a few moments....

When you are ready to return to your usual level of alertness and awareness, slowly begin to re-awaken your body. Wiggle your toes and fingers. Swing your arms gently. Shrug your shoulders. Stretch if you like.

You may now end this progressive muscle relaxation exercise feeling calm and refreshed.



Guiding Imagery Relaxation Script: Beach Visualization

Visualization relaxation is an effective way to relax the mind and body by picturing a relaxing scene, such as a beach, garden, meadow, or any other peaceful place.

This beach visualization script guides you to relax by imagining spending time on a beautiful beach.

Get comfortable. Sit in a supportive chair or lie on your back.

Relax your body by releasing any areas of tension. Allow your arms to go limp... then your legs....

Feel your arms and legs becoming loose and relaxed...

Now relax your neck and back by relaxing your spine.... release the hold of your muscles all the way from your head, down your neck....along each vertebra to the tip of your spine...

Breathe deeply into your diaphragm, drawing air fully into your lungs.... and release the air with a whooshing sound....

Breathe in again, slowly.... pause for a moment.... and breathe out.....

Draw a deep breath in.... and out....

In..... out.....

Become more and more relaxed with each breath....

Feel your body giving up all the tension.... becoming relaxed.... and calm.... peaceful....

Feel a wave of relaxation flow from the soles of your feet, to your ankles, lower legs, hips, pelvic area, abdomen, chest, back, hands, lower arms, elbows, upper arms, shoulders, neck, back of your head, face, and the top of your head....

Allow your entire body to rest heavily on the surface where you sit or lie. Now that your body is fully relaxed, allow the visualization relaxation to begin.

Imagine you are walking toward the ocean.... walking through a beautiful, tropical forest....



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You can hear the waves up ahead.... you can smell the ocean spray.... the air is moist and warm.... feel a pleasant, cool breeze blowing through the trees....

You walk along a path....coming closer to the sea....as you come to the edge of the trees, you see the brilliant aqua color of the ocean ahead....

You walk out of the forest and onto a long stretch of white sand.... the sand is very soft powder.... imagine taking off your shoes, and walking through the hot, white sand toward the water....

The beach is wide and long....

Hear the waves crashing to the shore....

Smell the clean salt water and beach....

You gaze again toward the water.... it is a bright blue-green....

See the waves washing up onto the sand..... and receding back toward the ocean.... washing up.... and flowing back down..... enjoy the ever-repeating rhythm of the waves...

Imagine yourself walking toward the water.... over the fine, hot sand.... you are feeling very hot....

As you approach the water, you can feel the mist from the ocean on your skin. You walk closer to the waves, and feel the sand becoming wet and firm....

A wave washes over the sand toward you.... and touches your toes before receding...

As you step forward, more waves wash over your feet... feel the cool water provide relief from the heat....

Walk further into the clear, clean water.... you can see the white sand under the water.... the water is a pleasant, relaxing temperature.... providing relief from the hot sun... cool but not cold....

You walk further into the water if you wish.... swim if you want to.... enjoy the ocean for a few minutes..... allow the visualization relaxation to deepen.... more and more relaxed... enjoy the ocean....

Now you are feeling calm and refreshed...

You walk back out of the water and onto the beach...



Stroll along the beach at the water's edge.... free of worries... no stress... calm.... enjoying this holiday....

Up ahead is a comfortable lounge chair and towel, just for you...

Sit or lie down in the chair, or spread the towel on the sand.... relax on the chair or towel.... enjoying the sun.... the breeze.... the waves.....

You feel peaceful and relaxed.... allow all your stresses to melt away....

When you are ready to return from your vacation, do so slowly....

Bring yourself back to your usual level of alertness and awareness....

Keep with you the feeling of calm and relaxation.... feeling ready to return to your day....

Open your eyes, stretch your muscles... and become fully alert... refreshed... and filled with energy.

You can practice this visualization relaxation as often as you wish, to provide a mental vacation whenever you need it. Visualization relaxation is a skill that can be learned; the more you practice, the more skilled you will become and more effectively you will be able to relax using visualization relaxation.



Guiding Imagery Relaxation Script: Forest Visualization

This Forest Visualization is a guided imagery relaxation script in which you imagine walking through a beautiful forest in the mountains.

Begin by finding a comfortable position sitting or lying down. Allow your body to begin to relax as you start to create a picture in your mind. Let the forest visualization begin.

Imagine yourself walking on a path through a forest. The path is soft beneath your shoes, a mixture of soil, fallen leaves, pine needles, and moss. As you walk, your body relaxes and your mind clears, more and more with each step you take.

Breathe in the fresh mountain air, filling your lungs completely. Now exhale. Breathe out all the air. Feeling refreshed.

Take another deep breath in...revitalizing.... and breathe out completely, letting your body relax further.

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply as you walk through the forest and continue the forest visualization.

The air is cool, but comfortable. Sun filters through the trees, making a moving dappled pattern on the ground before you.

Listen to the sounds of the forest.... Birds singing. A gentle breeze blowing. The leaves on the trees shift and sway in the soft wind.

Your body relaxes more and more as you walk. Count your steps and breathe in unison with your strides. Breathe in 2, 3, 4... hold 2, 3...exhale 2, 3, 4, 5.

Breathe in 2, 3, 4... hold 2, 3...exhale 2, 3, 4, 5.

Breathe in 2, 3, 4... hold 2, 3...exhale 2, 3, 4, 5.

Continue to breathe like this, slowly and deeply, as you become more and more relaxed.

As you walk through the forest visualization, feel your muscles relaxing and lengthening. As your arms swing in rhythm with your walking, they become loose, relaxed, and limp.

Feel your back relaxing as your spine lengthens and the muscles relax. Feel the tension leaving your body as you admire the scenery around you.



Your legs and lower body relax as well, feeling free and relaxed.

As you continue to walk through the forest visualization, you begin to climb up a slight incline. You easily tread along smooth rocks on the path. Feeling at one with nature.

The breeze continues to blow through the treetops, but you are sheltered on the path, and the air around you is calm.

Small saplings grow at the sides of the path.

Around you is an immense array of greens. Some of the leaves on the trees are a delicate, light green. Some leaves are deep, dark, true forest green.

Many trees have needles that look very soft and very green. The forest floor is thick, green moss.

Tall trees grow on either side of the path. Picture the variety of trees around you. Some have smooth, white bark. Others are darker, with coarse, heavy bark, deeply grooved. Enjoy the colors of the bark on the trees - white, tan, brown, red, black... many combinations of color. You admire the rough, brown bark of pine trees and enjoy the fresh pine scent.

Smell the forest around you. The air is fresh, and filled with the scent of trees, soil, and mountain streams.

Continue the forest visualization...

You can hear the sound of water faintly in the distance. The gentle burbling sound of a creek.

As you continue to walk through the forest, you are gaining elevation and getting closer to the sound of a running stream.

Continue to enjoy the forest around you. Enjoy the forest visualization.

As you near the top of the mountain, you hear the stream, very close now. The path curves up ahead. You can see sunlight streaming onto the path.

As you round the corner, you hear the water, and see a clearing in the trees up ahead. A beautiful look out point awaits.

You are growing tired from your journey. Your body feels pleasantly tired and heavy.



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Imagine yourself walking toward the clearing and the stream. Stepping stones make an easy path across the stream and toward the edge of the mountain. Step on each large flat stone to easily cross the small, shallow stream.

Up ahead is a large, smooth rock... like a chair waiting for you to rest. The rock is placed perfectly, high up on this beautiful vantage point.

Sit or lie down on the rock if you wish. It is very comfortable. You feel very comfortable and at ease. The sun shines down on you.

Looking around, you see mountains in the distance. Faint and blue.

You can look down from your vantage point into a valley with trees and a brilliant blue lake. Across from you is another mountain.

The clearing around you is made up of rocks, soil, pine needles, moss, and grass. The grass and mountain wildflowers around you blow gently in the breeze. A deer quietly emerges from the edge of the forest to graze in the clearing. As the deer raises its head to look at you, you can see its nostrils moving to catch your scent. The deer cautiously walks to the stream to drink before disappearing back into the forest.

Squirrels dart in and out of sight as they romp through the trees, and race across the clearing.

Feel the sun warming your body as you relax on the rock. Enjoy the majestic landscape around you and feel your body relaxing even more.

Your body becomes very warm, and very heavy.

Continue to breathe the clean, fresh air.

You feel so relaxed.

Calm.

At peace.

In unity with nature around you.

Enjoy the sights....sounds....and smells of the forest around you.

Feel the sun, warm on your skin.

Feel the gentle breeze blow across your cheek.



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Listen to the birds singing.

Hear the stream flowing. The leaves rustling in the breeze. Squirrels chattering.

See the flowers, trees, valley, and mountains around you.

Lay back on the comfortable rock, and you can look up to see the blue sky. Small white clouds float gently across the sky. Watch them drift slowly by. Shapes ever changing.

Enjoy this peaceful place.

(pause...)

When you are ready to leave this peaceful place, slowly begin to reawaken your body.

Know that you can return to this forest visualization in your imagination whenever you like.

As you reawaken, keep with you the feeling of calm, peace, and relaxation.

Wiggle your fingers and toes to wake up your muscles.

Shrug your shoulders. Stretch if you want to.

When you are ready, open your eyes and return to full wakefulness, feeling alert and refreshed.



Autumn Forest



Its now your time to relax as you take a slow walk through a serene autumn forest.

To begin settle into a comfortable position.

If this is comfortable allow your eyelids to close.

You might want to keep your eyes open softly gazing at one spot in the room. Soon your mind and body will begin to relax.

Focus your attention on your breathing.

Follow the cool air going in and the warm air coming out.

Notice if your breath is shallow or deep.

Do not attempt to change the breath. Just notice how it is.

Be curious whether your breath is fast or slow.

Again, do not attempt to change it, just notice it's quality.

This is your time.

There is nothing you need to do right now, nowhere else you need to be.

With each breath you take you allow yourself to be more relaxed, more and more comfortable.

Imagine that you are walking down the path in a lush autumn forest.

See the path in your imagination.

And try to picture everything I describe as clearly as you can.

Paint the forest in your mind.

And place yourself into this pleasantly cool, calming forest.



You feel lighter than air, almost as if you are floating as you stroll down the path becoming emerged in the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest.

It's peaceful, quiet, beautiful.

Majestic oak, maple, and chestnut trees tower above your head forming a canopy of leaves painted with bright, brilliant colors of fall.

Picture the colors in your mind's eye; deep reds, cheerful yellows, soothing oranges, peaceful greens, comforting golden-browns.

Pause for a moment and notice rays of sunlight peek through the canopy of autumn leaves and fall down on the forest floor creating an inspiring dance of light and shadow each time the gentle wind blows.

As you walk through this graceful dance of sun and shade on the forest floor you feel yourself more and more relaxed.

With each breath you take, with each step on this forest path you feel a deep sense of peace and tranquility.

You are continuing walking through the forest path.

Up ahead you see the forest open into a clearing.

The forest path leads you to a small meadow filled with white wild flowers.

The meadow is surrounded by majestic trees.

It's a peaceful, safe, beautiful place.

The flowers are gently waving in the breeze.

Slowly, you drift through the beautiful blossoms feeling the warm sun on your face, shoulders and back.

Stop for a moment and soak in the relaxing warmth of the gentle sun.

As the bright lights fall on your face you absorb some of their positive energy.

You pause and look up.

A hawk is soaring in the blue sky.

Powerful and strong bird is lifting your spirit with her as she soars up higher and higher.



As you continue walking through the meadow you come to see several round and flat boulders with a lively stream running between them.

You sit down on a smooth rock.

The stone feels cool and smooth.

Remove your shoes and socks, emerge your feet into a pleasantly cool sparkling clear water.

It rushes around your feet.

Feel the soft silky sand and smooth silky pebbles against the souls of your feet.

As you breath in the sights, sounds, and smells around you, the wind blows through the trees causing their colorful leafs cascade down in front of you. Picture the waterfall of colorful leafs dancing in the air and falling down, down, down, down in front of you and into the stream. You watch the leafs float away as the stream turns into a small river carrying your worries, fatigue, fears over rocks and under brunches, carrying them away and away, until they disappear.

You lie back on the rock, close your eyes, and listen to the lively stream as you bath in the gentle warm sun soaking it's energy.

Sound of the stream allows you to go deeper and deeper into a state of relaxation.

Feel the relaxation flow over you, like the water in the stream flowing over the rocks.

This is your place where you allow your worries to be carried away by the stream.

It's a place where you can reenergize from the solar energy.

This is your safe and peaceful place.

It's a place you can visit as often as you like.

Now, the image of the forest begins to fade in your mind.

With confidence that you can return here, watch the image of this place slowly drift into a distance, getting smaller and smaller.

Let it drift away for now.

You can return when you like.



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Now focus on your breath.

Notice the cool air going in and the warm air coming out.

Notice if your breath is shallow or deep.

Do not attempt to change the breath.

Just notice how it is.

Be curious whether your breath is fast or slow.

Again, do not attempt to change it, just notice it's quality.

Feel the sense of energy and vitality as you are ready to face whatever the day will bring.

You can face the day with confidence and calm.

Open your eyes and take a slow deep breath.

Welcome back.

I hope your mini vacation was a pleasant one.



Guiding Imagery Relaxation Script: Peaceful Meadow

This guided imagery relaxation script will guide you to imagine relaxing in a peaceful meadow.

Take a moment to relax your body. Get comfortable. Notice how your body feels, and make some slight adjustments to increase your comfort. Take a deep breath in. Hold it... and breathe out, releasing tension.

Breathe in again, and as you exhale, allow your body to relax slightly.

Continue to breathe slowly.... Deeply.

As you visualize the following scene, let your body and mind become more and more relaxed with each moment.

Imagine yourself walking outdoors.

You are walking through the trees... small aspens, their leaves moving in a slight breeze.

The sun shines down warmly.

You walk toward a clearing in the trees. As you come closer to the clearing, you see that it is a meadow.

You walk out of the trees, into the meadow. Tall green grass blows gently....

You are probably feeling a bit tired.... It would be so nice to sit down in the grass.

Walk further into the meadow now.... Looking around.... Imagine the meadow in your mind's eye.... What does this peaceful meadow look like?

Find a place to sit. You might want to sit or lie down in the grass.... Perhaps you have a blanket with you that you can unroll over the soft grass and lie down.

Feel the breeze caress your skin as you sit or lie down in the sun.

It is a pleasant day... warm, but not hot.... Quiet and peaceful.

Notice the sights around you. The grass, whispering... See the mix of meadow grasses, clover, wildflowers around you.



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Watch a small ladybug climb a blade of grass. Climbing up toward the top, pausing for a moment, and then flying away.

Imagine closing your eyes and listening to the sounds of the peaceful meadow. Hear birds singing... the breeze rustling the grass softly...

Feel the sun on your face. Imagine turning your face up toward the sky, eyes closed, enjoying the warmth of the sun.

Smell the grass... the wildflowers... the smell of the sun on the earth...

Look around again to see the sights around you. Notice how the ground follows gentle contours of hills. See the blue sky above you... a few wispy clouds drifting slowly by.

See the trees at the edge of the meadow.

The meadow is lush and green, a haven for birds and animals. As you watch, a deer peers out through the trees, and emerges to graze at the edge of the meadow.

The deer raises its head to look at you, sniffing the breeze, and then turns, disappearing silently into the trees.

Rest and luxuriate in this peaceful meadow. Notice the sights, sounds, and smells around you. Feel the soft grass beneath you, the sun and breeze on your skin. Imagine all the details of this place.

(pause)

Now it is time to leave the peaceful meadow and return to the present. Notice your surroundings. Feel the surface beneath you. Hear the sounds around you. Open your eyes to look around, re-orienting to the present.

Take a moment to stretch your muscles and allow your body to reawaken.

When you are ready, return to your usual activities, keeping with you a feeling of peace and calm.



Guiding Imagery Relaxation Script: Peaceful Place



The purpose of this peaceful place relaxation script is to relax your mind and guide you to imagine your own peaceful, safe place. This place will be an imaginary area that you can visualize to help calm and relax your mind when you are feeling stressed.

Begin by setting aside a few minutes so that you can relax without having anything else you need to focus on. Find a comfortable position.

For the next few moments, focus on calming your mind by focusing on your breathing. Allow your breathing to center and relax you. Breathe in.... and out.

In.... out....

In.... Out....

Continue to breathe slowly and peacefully as you allow the tension to start to leave your body.

Release the areas of tension, feeling your muscles relax and become more comfortable with each breath.

Continue to let your breathing relax you....

Breathe in....2...3...4.... hold....2.....3..... out...2...3....4..... 5
again....2.....3....4....hold....2....3.... out...2...3....4.... 5

Continue to breathe slowly, gently, comfortably.....

Let the rate of your breathing become gradually slower as your body relaxes.



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Now begin to create a picture in your mind of a place where you can completely relax. Imagine what this place needs to be like in order for you to feel calm and relaxed.

Start with the physical layout of the place you are imagining..... where is this peaceful place? You might envision somewhere outdoors.... or indoors..... it may be a small place or large one..... create an image of this place. (pause)

Now picture some more details about your peaceful place. Who is in this place? Are you alone? Or perhaps you are with someone else? Are there other people present? Animals? Birds? Imagine who is at your place, whether it is you only, or if you have company. (pause)

Imagine even more detail about your surroundings. Focus now on the relaxing sounds around you in your peaceful place. Now imagine any tastes and smells your place has to offer.

Imagine the sensations of touch... including the temperature, any breeze that may be present, the surface you are on.... imagine the details of this calming place in your mind.

Focus now on the sights of your place - colors, shapes.... objects.... plants..... water..... all of the beautiful things that make your place enjoyable.

To add further detail to this relaxing scene, imagine yourself there. What would you be doing in this calming place? Perhaps you are just sitting, enjoying this place, relaxing. Maybe you imagine walking around.... or doing any other variety of activities.

Picture yourself in this peaceful place. Imagine a feeling of calm..... of peace..... a place where you have no worries, cares, or concerns.... a place where you can simply rejuvenate, relax, and enjoy just being. (pause)

Enjoy your peaceful place for a few moments more. Memorize the sights, sounds, and sensations around you. Know that you can return to this place in your mind whenever you need a break. You can take a mental vacation to allow yourself to relax and regroup before returning to your regular roles.

In these last few moments of relaxation, create a picture in your mind that you will return to the next time you need a quick relaxation break. Picture yourself in your peaceful place. This moment you are imagining now, you can picture again the next time you need to relax. When you are ready to return to your day, file away the imaginary place in your mind, waiting for you the next time you need it.

Turn your attention back to the present. Notice your surroundings as your body and mind return to their usual level of alertness and wakefulness. Keep with you the feeling of calm from your peaceful place as you return to your everyday life.



Guided Meditation Samatha – Calm Abiding Meditation 1

The following is an adaptation of a practice common to many Buddhist traditions.



- 1) Grounding: Help the person settle into their seat.
 - Taking a good posture with eyes partly open (soft gaze).
 - Notice feet
 - Notice weight in the chair (or on cushion)
 - Notice your awareness in your body in this moment
- 2) Focus on breath.
 - Notice breathing... don't change it... just recognize it
 - Then slowly draw your breath down slightly deeper... slowly and quietly into your belly
 - Nice slow, quiet full breaths... and just notice what is there.
- 3) Focus on awareness
 - Notice what's happening:
 - In your mind...
 - Your emotions...
 - In your body...
 - Just feel without judgement... just notice and let be
- 4) Full Focus on Breath
 - Now put 100% of your focus on your breath...
 - Pay very close attention...
 - Following it as the cool air as it comes in through your nostrils.... slowly, quietly...
 - Follow the breath in as it expands your lungs and down into your belly.
 - Warm air flowing out...
 - Notice the warmth as the air leaves your body.... just noticing.
 - All your attention... all your focus... on your breath.



5) Guidance for Dealing with Distractions

- You may become aware of thoughts arising as you breath...
- Maybe a few little ones, maybe some big distracting ones....
- Just recognize them as thoughts and bring yourself back to your breath.

6) Divided Focus – Breathe and Awareness

- Now, see if you can keep 50% of your attention on your breath and...
- Open the other half of your awareness to what you are simply aware of around you....
- Keep your eyes soft...
- No need to draw your attention to anything in particular...
- Just see what you are aware of.
- Notice your breath... still slow, quiet and full...
- And now include what you are aware of in your softened field of vision...
- What you are hearing... subtle as some of those sounds may be....
- Breathing... noticing.... the temperature on your skin...
- Notice your body... no judgements... just feel... just notice... see what's there....
- Your breath.... your body... your environment... all one experience... your experience.
- Just attend... just breath... just feel...

7) Closure

- With your focus on your breath and your awareness, start to fully come back the room we are in together.
- Notice the energy in the room.
- Notice the energy in you.
- Are they the same?
- Take a few seconds and reflect on your experience of yourself in this process.
- How would you describe your experience?
- Was it easy? Difficult? Challenging perhaps?
- Or maybe it was peaceful or even enjoyable.
- Just notice how you relate to your experience. To yourself.

Thanks for being a part of your process with me.



Calm-Abiding Meditation (2)



The following presents basic instructions on how to start a practice of practicing *Calm-Abiding* meditation. Learning to meditate in this way starts with beginning to pay attention to three key areas:

- 1) **Posture**
- 2) **Breath**
- 3) **Mind**

Posture

It is recommended to begin meditation with good posture. Awareness of these six points will promote a relaxed yet sturdy posture.

Seat

Whether sitting on a cushion on the floor or in a chair, ensure that the seat flat, not causing you to lean forward, backward or side-to-side.

Legs

On a cushion: Your legs are crossed comfortably in front of you with your knees lower than your hips.
On a chair: Your feet are flat on the floor, with the knees a few inches apart.

Upper Body (Spine, neck and head)

Your posture is upright, with a “strong back” and an “open front.” Slouching or leaning can interfere with your meditation in several ways. One way to get a good posture is to imagine a string attached to the crown of your head that gently pulls you upward, naturally aligning your spine, neck and head.

Hands

Your hands are open and relaxed, with palms down, resting on the thighs.

Eyes

Your eyes are kept slightly open, with a soft, downward gaze about four to six feet in front of you.

Mouth

Your mouth is very slightly open to relax the jaw, allowing your breath to move easily through both the mouth and nose. Your tongue is relaxed, with the tip resting gently behind your upper teeth.



Each time you sit down to meditate it is good to go through **establish your posture by going through these six points**. Throughout your sitting, gently bring your awareness to bring your attention back to your posture. This can be especially helpful if you find yourself getting distracted or drowsy.

Breath

The object mediation is a **focus on breath**. Attention is placed on the cool air as it comes in through the nostrils with each in-breath and the warm air that flows out with each out-breath. Each time we become distracted by a thought, a noise, or anything else, we refocus attention back to the breath.

Mind

Much of the time, the mind can be wild and untamed. Thoughts about this and that, memories of the past, anticipation of the future, judgments about ourselves and others often leave us feeling quite overwhelmed. One way to think about mediation is that it is a process of taming the mind. Working with ourselves in this way, we become more aware of our thoughts and the ways they tend to send us adrift and away from the *now-ness* of the present moment.

We do not, however, try to directly change anything about our thoughts. Instead, we simply recognize them for what they are (thoughts), silently and gently label them to ourselves as such (thinking) and return our focus to the breath. No matter what the thought may be, no matter how intense it is and no matter how long you have been distracted, all you have to do is **recognize the thought and bring your awareness back to your breath**.

This may happen ten thousand times as you catch each thought that arises, or it may be that you only catch yourself once throughout your entire sitting. At every opportunity, just notice what is there in your mind and simply return to your breath. While this may be challenging at first, over time, it does become easier. Learning to meditate is like learning anything new: it takes time and practice to develop the skill.

It is recommended that you try to find ten minutes to do calm-abiding meditation in the morning and, if you are able, to do another 10 minutes shortly before bed. It is fine to sit for a shorter period as well. Over time, you can increase the length of your sessions if you like. Please remember that the key to this practice is to be gentle and kind to yourself. Sitting regularly can be challenging and life can get in the way. Do what you can when you can, but no pressure. Sit only as time and energy permit. **There is no way to meditate wrong**. Any time spent in quiet solitude can be of benefit. Working with your **posture, breath and mind** in this way may serve to bring about even more benefit for you in your life. I encourage you to experiment with your practice to make it work for you.



Walking Meditation Instructions

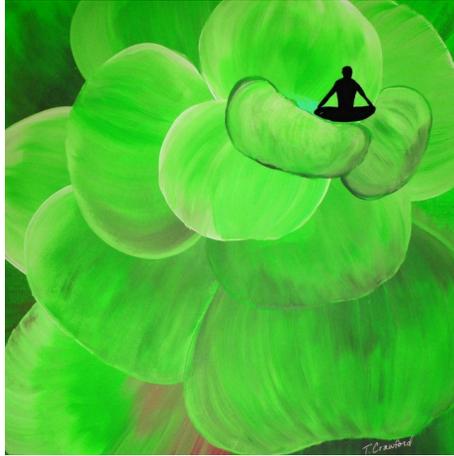
Stand and notice your body. Begin walking naturally with your arms relaxed at your sides or with your hands together at your navel.

1. Keep a good, erect posture. Relaxed and aligned without being overly rigid or slouched.
2. Be mindful of your breathing without trying to control it. Let your breathing feel natural, not artificial.
3. Draw your attention to your feet as you move. The sensation of the feet touching the earth as you walk is the object of meditation.
4. There are couple of ways to hold your eyes. One is to hold a soft gaze, slightly downcast in front of you. Another is to allow your eyes notice the environment and to be drawn to whatever looks interesting. See which works best for you. (It is important to be aware of what is going on around you without becoming distracted.)
5. Be mindful of your walking, make each step a gesture and move with slow, small, deliberate, balanced, footsteps.
6. As with sitting mediation, when you recognize that you are thinking or distracted by a noise or other sensations, silently name it to yourself (“thinking” or “sound”) and redirect your attention to your feet as they touch with the ground with each step.
7. You can practice indoors by walking around the perimeter of your largest room. If you practice outdoors, it is helpful to find quiet setting. Walk for as little as little or as much as you have the time, energy and desire.





Instructions for Contemplation



1. Take a few minutes to calm your mind by resting with your breath (as in the calm-abiding meditation).
2. When you feel ready, bring forward a thought, idea, concept or intention in the form of a word.
3. The words you choose will be the focus of your contemplative meditation. When you become distracted, bring your attention back to your chosen words.
4. To help you bring your heart and mind together in this practice, think deeply about what the words mean to you. Envision images and ideas that inspire meaning for you.
5. As you get a sense for how these words make you feel, let go of the words and rest in the direct experience of these feelings.
6. Close your session when you sense that you have embodied these feeling, and take this deeper awareness into your world with you.



Tension Dissolving Breath



1. Sit, stand or lay down in a comfortable position.
2. Notice your breathing just as it is without adjusting anything about it.
3. Visualize breathing in though all of the pores in your skin, bringing peace into your entire body.
4. Visualize breathing out, also through all of the pores in your skin, letting go of tension and confusion.

This approach to breathwork can be done anytime, anywhere to help us settle into the moment, invite clarity in and dissolve tension. Breathing with this visualization for as few as two or three minutes can significantly contribute to a sense of peace that we can bring into our world. As with all of these practices, experiment and see how they can serve you best.



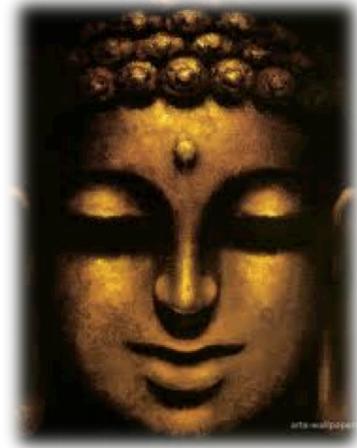
Hearing Exercise

“I will invite you to bring your attention to listening to the sounds in the room... PAUSE

As best as you can, let go of the categories normally used to make sense of what is heard. Instead of hearing a chair scraping or a person coughing, try to hear the sounds as patterns of pitch... tone... volume... PAUSE

Every time your mind wonders, gently bring your attention back just to hearing... PAUSE.

If the mind wonders 10 times, gently, nonjudgmentally, bring it back 10 times. If it wonders away a 100 times, gently and nonjudgmentally bring it back to hearing a 100. LONG PAUSE



When we pay attention to the sound in this way, we seek to make a transition from the “doing” mode in which people often arrive at the class, to the being mode.

Transition to sitting meditation: We will explore the being mode further in the mindfulness of the breath and sitting meditation.”

Seeing Exercise



“I will invite you to look outside into the window and bring your attention to seeing... PAUSE

As best as you can, let go of the categories normally used to make sense of what we are looking at. Rather than viewing elements of the scenes as trees or cars, or whatever, simply see them as patterns of colour and shapes and movement... PAUSE

Every time your mind wonders, gently bring your attention back just to seeing... PAUSE.

If the mind wonders 10 times, gently, nonjudgmentally, bring it back 10 times. If it wonders away a 100 times, gently and nonjudgmentally bring it back to seeing a 100. LONG PAUSE

When we pay attention to what we are seeing in this way, we seek to make a transition from the “doing” mode in which people often arrive at the class, to the being mode.

Transition to sitting meditation: We will explore the being mode further in the mindfulness of the breath and sitting meditation.”



The Raisin Exercise

Note. There is at least a 10-second pause between phrases, and the instructions are delivered in a matter-of-fact way, at a slow but deliberate pace, asking the class to do the following:

- I'm going to go around the class and give you each a few objects.
- Now, what I would like you to do is focus on one of the objects and just imagine that you have never seen anything like it before. Imagine you have just dropped in from Mars this moment and you have never seen anything like it before in your life.
- Taking one of these objects and holding it in the palm of your hand, or between your finger and thumb. (Pause)
- Paying attention to seeing it. (Pause)
- Looking at it carefully, as if you had never seen such a thing before. (Pause)
- Turning it over between your fingers. (Pause)
- Exploring its texture between your fingers. (Pause)
- Examining the highlights where the light shines ... the darker hollows and folds. (Pause)
- Letting your eyes explore every part of it, as if you had never seen such a thing before. (Pause)
- And if, while you are doing this, any thoughts come to mind about "what a strange thing we are doing" or "what is the point of this" or "I don't like these," then just noting them as thoughts and bringing your awareness back to the object. (Pause)
- And now smelling the object, taking it and holding it beneath your nose, and with each inbreath, carefully noticing the smell of it. (Pause)



- And now taking another look at it. (Pause)
- And now slowly taking the object to your mouth, maybe noticing how your hand and arm know exactly where to put it, perhaps noticing your mouth watering as it comes up. (Pause)
- And then gently placing the object in the mouth, noticing how it is “received,” without biting it, just exploring the sensations of having it in your mouth. (Pause)
- And when you are ready, very consciously taking a bite into it and noticing the tastes that it releases. (Pause)
- Slowly chewing it, ... noticing the saliva in the mouth, ... the change in consistency of the object. (Pause)
- Then, when you feel ready to swallow, seeing if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow it. (Pause) Finally, seeing if you can follow the sensations of swallowing it, sensing it moving down to your stomach, and also realizing that your body is now exactly one raisin heavier.



Body Scan Meditation

- ✿ Allow your eyes to close gently.
- ✿ Regardless of what happens (e.g., if you fall asleep, lose concentration, keep thinking of other things or focusing on the wrong bit of body, or not feeling anything), just do it! These are your experiences in the moment. Just be aware of them.
- ✿ If your mind is wandering a lot, simply note the thoughts (as passing events) and then bring the mind gently back to the body scan.
- ✿ Let go of ideas of “success,” “failure,” “doing it really well,” or “trying to purify the body.” This is not a competition. It is not a skill for which you need to strive. The only discipline involved is regular and frequent practice. Just do it with an attitude of openness and curiosity.
- ✿ Let go of any expectations about what the body scan will do for you: Imagine it as a seed you have planted. The more you poke around and interfere, the less it will be able to develop. So with the body scan, just give it the right conditions—peace and quiet, regular and frequent practice. That is all. The more you try to influence what it will do for you, the less it will do.
- ✿ Try approaching your experience in each moment with the attitude: “OK, that’s just the way things are right now.” If you try to fight off unpleasant thoughts, feelings, or body sensations, the upsetting feelings will only distract you from doing anything else. Be aware, be nonstriving, be in the moment, accept things as they are. Just do it.
- ✿ Take a few moments to get in touch with the movement of your breath and the sensations in the body. When you are ready, bring your awareness to the physical sensations in your body, especially to the sensations of touch or pressure, where your body makes contact with the floor or bed. On each outbreath, allow yourself to let go, to sink a little deeper into the mat.



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

- ✿ Remind yourself of the intention of this practice. Its aim is not to feel any different, relaxed, or calm; this may happen or it may not. Instead, the intention of the practice is, as best you can, to bring awareness to any sensations you detect, as you focus your attention on each part of the body in turn.
- ✿ Now bring your awareness to the physical sensations in the lower abdomen, becoming aware of the changing patterns of sensations in the abdominal wall as you breathe in, and as you breathe out. Take a few minutes to feel the sensations as you breathe in and as you breathe out.
- ✿ Having connected with the sensations in the abdomen, bring the focus or “spotlight” of your awareness down the left leg, into the left foot, and out to the toes of the left foot. Focus on each of the toes of the left foot in turn, bringing a gentle curiosity to investigate the quality of the sensations you find, perhaps noticing the sense of contact between the toes, a sense of tingling, warmth, or no particular sensation.
- ✿ When you are ready, on an inbreath, feel or imagine the breath entering the lungs, and then passing down into the abdomen, into the left leg, the left foot, and out to the toes of the left foot. Then, on the outbreath, feel or imagine the breath coming all the way back up, out of the foot, into the leg, up through the abdomen, chest, and out through the nose.
- ✿ As best you can, continue this for a few breaths, breathing down into the toes, and back out from the toes. It may be difficult to get the hang of this—just practice this “breathing into” as best you can, approaching it playfully.
- ✿ Now, when you are ready, on an outbreath, let go of awareness of the toes, and bring your awareness to the sensations on the bottom of your left foot—bringing a gentle, investigative awareness to the sole of the foot, the instep, the heel (e.g., noticing the sensations where the heel makes contact with the mat. Experiment with “breathing with” the sensations—being aware of the breath in the background, as, in the foreground, you explore the sensations of the lower foot.
- ✿ Now allow the awareness to expand into the rest of the foot—to the ankle, the top of the foot, and right into the bones and joints. Then, taking a slightly deeper breath, directing it down into the whole of the left foot, and, as the breath lets go on the outbreath, let go of the left foot completely, allowing the focus of awareness to move into the lower left leg—the calf, shin, knee, and so on, in turn.
- ✿ Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity, to the physical sensations in each part of the rest of the body in turn—to the upper left leg, the right toes, right foot, right leg, pelvic area, back, abdomen, chest, fingers, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, head, and face. In each area, as best you can, bring the same detailed level of awareness and gentle curiosity to the bodily sensations present. As you leave each major area, “breathe in” to it on the inbreath, and let go of that region on the outbreath.



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

- ✿ . When you become aware of tension, or of other intense sensations in a particular part of the body, you can “breathe in” to them—using the inbreath gently to bring awareness right into the sensations, and, as best you can, have a sense of their letting go, or releasing, on the outbreath.
- ✿ .The mind will inevitably wander away from the breath and the body from time to time. That is entirely normal. It is what minds do. When you notice it, gently acknowledge it, noticing where the mind has gone off to, and then gently return your attention to the part of the body you intended to focus on.
- ✿ After you have “scanned” the whole body in this way, spend a few minutes being aware of a sense of the body as a whole, and of the breath flowing freely in and out of the body.
- ✿ If you find yourself falling asleep, you might find it helpful to prop your head up with a pillow, open your eyes, or do the practice sitting up rather than lying down.



Mindfulness of the Breath

- ✿ Settle into a comfortable sitting position, either on a straight-backed chair or on a soft surface on the floor, with your buttocks supported by cushions or a low stool. If you use a chair, it is very helpful to sit away from the back of the chair, so that your spine is self supporting. If you sit on the floor, it is helpful if your knees actually touch the floor; experiment with the height of the cushions or stool until you feel comfortably and firmly supported.
- ✿ Allow your back to adopt an erect, dignified, and comfortable posture. If sitting on a chair, place your feet flat on the floor, with your legs uncrossed. Gently close your eyes.
- ✿ Bring your awareness to the level of physical sensations by focusing your attention on the sensations of touch and pressure in your body where it makes contact with the floor and whatever you are sitting on. Spend a minute or two exploring these sensations, just as in the body scan.
- ✿ Now bring your awareness to the changing patterns of physical sensations in the lower abdomen as the breath moves in and out of your body. (When you first try this practice, it may be helpful to place your hand on your lower abdomen and become aware of the changing pattern of sensations where your hand makes contact with your abdomen.
- ✿ Having “tuned in” to the physical sensations in this area in this way, you can remove your hand and continue to focus on the sensations in the abdominal wall.)
- ✿ Focus your awareness on the sensations of slight stretching as the abdominal wall rises with each inbreath, and of gentle deflation as it falls with each outbreath.



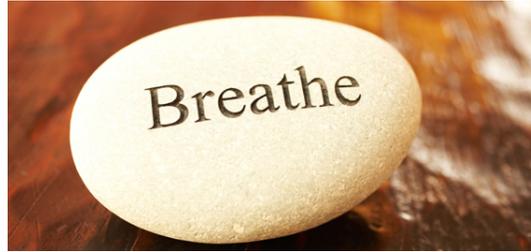
Heartfulness Psychotherapy

- ✿ As best you can, follow with your awareness the changing physical sensations in the lower abdomen all the way through as the breath enters your body on the inbreath and all the way through as the breath leaves your body on the outbreath, perhaps noticing the slight pauses between one inbreath and the following outbreath, and between one outbreath and the following inbreath.
- ✿ There is no need to try to control the breathing in any way—simply let the breath breathe itself. As best you can, also bring this attitude of allowing to the rest of your experience. There is nothing to be fixed, no particular state to be achieved.
- ✿ As best you can, simply allow your experience to be your experience, without needing it to be other than it is.
- ✿ Sooner or later (usually sooner), your mind will wander away from the focus on the breath in the lower abdomen to thoughts, planning, daydreams, drifting along—whatever. This is perfectly OK—it’s simply what minds do. It is not a mistake or a failure. When you notice that your awareness is no longer on the breath, gently congratulate yourself—you have come back and are once more aware of your experience!
- ✿ You may want to acknowledge briefly where the mind has been (“Ah, there’s thinking”). Then, gently escort the awareness back to a focus on the changing pattern of physical sensations in the lower abdomen, renewing the intention to pay attention to the ongoing inbreath or outbreath, whichever you find.
- ✿ However often you notice that the mind has wandered (and this will quite likely happen over and over and over again), as best you can, congratulate yourself each time on reconnecting with your experience in the moment, gently escorting the attention back to the breath, and simply resume following in awareness the changing pattern of physical sensations that come with each inbreath and outbreath.
- ✿ As best you can, bring a quality of kindness to your awareness, perhaps seeing the repeated wanderings of the mind as opportunities to bring patience and gentle curiosity to your experience.
- ✿ Continue with the practice for 15 minutes, or longer if you wish, perhaps reminding yourself from time to time that the intention is simply to be aware of your experience in each moment, as best you can, using the breath as an anchor to gently reconnect with the here and now each time you notice that your mind has wandered and is no longer down in the abdomen, following the breath.



Breathing Space

- “The first thing we do with this practice, because it’s brief and we want to come into the moment quickly, is to take a very definite posture ... relaxed, dignified, back erect, but not stiff, letting our bodies express a sense of being present and awake.
- “Now, closing your eyes, if that feels comfortable for you, the first step is being aware, really aware, of what is going on with you right now. Becoming aware of what is going through your mind; What thoughts are around? Here, again, as best you can, just noting the thoughts as mental events... So we note them, and then we note the feelings that are around at the moment ... in particular, turning toward any sense of discomfort or unpleasant feelings. So rather than try to push them away or shut them out, just acknowledge them, perhaps saying, “Ah, there you are, that’s how it is right now.” And similarly with sensations in the body...Are there sensations of tension, of holding, or whatever? And again, awareness of them, simply noting them. OK, that’s how it is right now.
- “So, we’ve got a sense of what is going on right now. We’ve stepped out of automatic pilot. The second step is to collect our awareness by focusing on a single object—the movements of the breath. So now we really gather ourselves, focusing attention down there in the movements of the abdomen, the rise and fall of the breath ... spending a minute or so to focus on the movement of the abdominal wall ... moment by moment, breath by breath, as best we can. So that you know when the breath is moving in, and you know when the breath is moving out. Just binding your awareness to the pattern of movement down there ... gathering yourself, using the anchor of the breath to really be present.
- “And now as a third step, having gathered ourselves to some extent, we allow our awareness to expand. As well as being aware of the breath, we also include a sense of the body as a whole. So that we get this more spacious awareness... A sense of the body as a whole, including any tightness or sensations related to holding in the shoulders, neck, back, or face ... following the breath as if your whole body is breathing. Holding it all in this slightly softer ... more spacious awareness.
- “And then, when you are ready, just allowing your eyes to open.



Three Minute Breathing Space

In mindfulness training, the Three Minute Breathing Space is taught as a practical, effective tool to manage stress, feel more centred - and, as we come out of Automatic Pilot, be more in control of our responses. The Breathing Space offers a way to reconnect with the present moment, and to your experience. It can be practised anywhere, at any time, and doesn't need to be three minutes - this is just a guide.

Acknowledging

- ✿ Sit or stand with a tall spine. Close your eyes or keep a soft half gaze. Feel the body grounded.
- ✿ Begin to notice the nature of your current experience: begin to tune in with your bodily sensations, your thoughts and feelings.
- ✿ Notice the texture of your experience without becoming drawn into it, or pushing it away. Become a quiet observer, just noticing.
- ✿ Come gently back to this broad, soft awareness, whenever you notice you are becoming entangled with thoughts or worries.

Gathering

- ✿ After a minute or so, gently redirect your attention to your breath - to each inbreath, and to each outbreath.
- ✿ Again, just notice your breathing: its speed, texture, quality; and where you can feel the breath most alive in the body. Your breath is an anchor to bring you back to the present.
- ✿ Keep coming back to the sensation of the breath, whenever you become aware of being distracted. Do this with kindness, without judgement.

Expanding

- ✿ Expand the field of your awareness around your breathing, so that you become aware of your whole body: your posture, breath, facial expression.
- ✿ Gently broaden out this awareness to notice the nature of your whole experience. Hold everything in your awareness with equanimity.

Do this practice at any time in the day, or night, when you feel you could benefit from feeling more grounded and relaxed. Think of the Three Minute Breathing Space as a habit; to form a tool to help you find more space in your thoughts and emotions, and perhaps a greater lightness of being.



Sitting Meditation: Mindfulness of the Breath and Body

- When you feel reasonably settled on awareness of the breath, intentionally allow the awareness to expand around the breath to include, as well, a sense of physical sensations throughout the whole body.
- While still aware, in the background, of the movements of the breath in the lower abdomen, change your primary focus, so that you become aware of a sense of the body as a whole and of the changing patterns of sensation throughout the body.
- You may find that you get a sense of the movements of the breath throughout the body, as if the whole body were breathing.
- If you choose, together with this wider sense of the body as a whole, and of the breath moving to and fro, include awareness of the more local, particular patterns of physical sensations that arise where the body makes contact with the floor, chair, cushion, or stool—the sensations of touch, pressure, or contact of the feet or knees with the floor; the buttocks with whatever supports them; the hands where they rest on the thighs, or on each other.
- As best you can, hold all these sensations, together with the sense of the breath and of the body as a whole, in a wider space of awareness of physical sensations.
- The mind will wander repeatedly away from the breath and body sensations—this is natural, to be expected, and in no way a mistake or a failure.



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

- Whenever you notice that your awareness has drifted away from sensations in the body, you might want to congratulate yourself; you have “woken up.” Gently note where your mind was (“thinking”), and kindly focus your attention back to your breathing and to a sense of your body as a whole.
- As best you can, keep things simple, gently attending to the actuality of sensations throughout your body from one moment to the next.
- As you sit, some sensations may be particularly intense, such as pains in the back or knees or shoulders, and you may find that awareness is repeatedly drawn to these sensations, and away from your intended focus on the breath or body as a whole.
- You may want to use these times to experiment with intentionally bringing the focus of awareness into the region of intensity and, as best you can, explore with gentle and wise attention the detailed pattern of sensations there: What, precisely, do the sensations feel like? Where exactly are they? Do they vary over time or from one part of the region of intensity to another? Not so much thinking about it, as just feeling it, you may want to use the breath as a vehicle to carry awareness into such regions of intensity, “breathing in” to them, just as in the body scan.
- Whenever you find yourself “carried away” from awareness in the moment by the intensity of physical sensations, or in any other way, reconnect with the here and now by refocusing awareness on the movements of the breath or on a sense of the body as a whole.
- Once you have gathered yourself in this way, allow the awareness to expand once more, so it includes a sense of sensations throughout the body.



Mindful Walking

- Find a place where you can walk up and down, without feeling concerned about whether people can see you. It can be inside or outside.
- Stand at one end of your walk, with your feet parallel to each other, about 4 to 6 inches apart, and your knees “unlocked,” so that they can gently flex. Allow your arms to hang loosely by your sides, or hold your hands loosely together in front of your body. Direct your gaze, softly, straight ahead.
- Bring the focus of your awareness to the bottoms of your feet, getting a direct sense of the physical sensations of the contact of the feet with the ground and the weight of your body transmitted through your legs and feet to the ground. You may find it helpful to flex your knees slightly a few times to get a clearer sense of the sensations in the feet and legs.
- When you are ready, transfer the weight of the body into the right leg, noticing the changing pattern of physical sensations in the legs and feet as the left leg “empties” and the right leg takes over the support of the rest of the body.
- With the left leg “empty,” allow the left heel to rise slowly from the floor, noticing the sensations in the calf muscles as you do so, and continue, allowing the whole of the left foot to lift gently until only the toes are in contact with the floor. Aware of the physical sensations in the feet and legs, slowly lift the left foot, carefully move it forward, feeling the foot and leg as they move through the air, and place the heel on the floor. Allow the rest of the bottom of the left foot to make contact with the floor as you transfer the weight of the body into the left leg and foot, aware of the increasing physical sensations in the left leg and foot, and of the “emptying” of the right leg and the right heel leaving the floor.



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

- With the weight fully transferred to the left leg, allow the rest of the right foot to lift, and move it slowly forward, aware of the changing patterns of physical sensations in the foot and leg as you do so. Focusing your attention on the right heel as it makes contact with the ground, transfer the weight of the body into the right foot as it is placed gently on the ground, aware of the shifting pattern of physical sensations in the two legs and feet.
- In this way, slowly move from one end of your walk to the other, aware particularly of the sensations in the bottoms of the feet and heels as they make contact with the floor, and of the sensations in the muscles of the legs as they swing forward.
- At the end of your walk, turn slowly around, aware of and appreciating the complex pattern of movements through which the body changes direction, and continue walking.
- Walk up and down in this way, being aware, as best you can, of physical sensations in the feet and legs, and of the contact of the feet with the floor. Keep your gaze directed softly ahead.
- When you notice that the mind has wandered away from awareness of the sensations of walking, gently escort the focus of attention back to the sensations in the feet and legs, using the sensations as the feet contact the floor, in particular, as an “anchor” to reconnect with the present moment, just as you used the breath in the sitting meditation.
- Continue to walk for 10 to 15 minutes, or longer if you wish.
- To begin with, walk at a pace that is slower than usual, to give yourself a better chance to be fully aware of the sensations of walking. Once you feel comfortable walking slowly with awareness, you can experiment as well with walking at faster speeds, up to and beyond normal walking speed. If you are feeling particularly agitated, it may be helpful to begin walking fast, with awareness, and to slow down naturally as you settle.
- As often as you can, bring the same kind of awareness that you cultivate in walking meditation to your normal, everyday, experiences of walking.



Sitting Meditation: Mindfulness of Sounds and Thoughts

Practice mindfulness of breath and body, as described earlier, until you feel reasonably settled.

1. Allow the focus of your awareness to shift from sensations in the body to hearing. Bring your attention to the ears and then allow the awareness to open and expand, so that there is receptiveness to sounds as they arise, wherever they arise.
2. There is no need to go searching for sounds or listening for particular sounds. Instead, as best you can, simply open your mind so that it is receptive to awareness of sounds from all directions as they arise—sounds that are close, sounds that are far away, sounds that are in front, behind, to the side, above or below. Open to a whole space of sound around you. Be aware of obvious sounds and of more subtle sounds, aware of the space between sounds, aware of silence.
3. As best you can, be aware of sounds simply as sensations. When you find that you are thinking *about* the sounds, reconnect, as best you can, with direct awareness of their sensory qualities (patterns of pitch, timbre, loudness, and duration), rather than their meanings or implications.
4. Whenever you notice that your awareness is no longer focused on sounds in the moment, gently acknowledge where the mind had moved to, and then retune the awareness back to sounds as they arise and pass from one moment to the next.
5. Mindfulness of sound can be a very valuable practice on its own, as a way of expanding awareness and giving it a more open, spacious quality, whether or not the practice is preceded by awareness of sensations or followed, as here, by awareness of thoughts.



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

6. When you are ready, let go of awareness of sounds and refocus your attention, so that your objects of awareness are now thoughts as events in the mind. Just as, with sounds, you focused awareness on whatever sounds arose, noticing them arise, develop, and pass away, so now, as best you can, bring awareness to thoughts that arise in the mind in just the same way—noticing when thoughts arise, focusing awareness on them as they pass through the space of the mind and eventually disappear. There is no need to try to make thoughts come or go. Just let them arise naturally, in the same way that you related to sounds arising and passing away.

7. Some people find it helpful to bring awareness to thoughts in the mind in the same way that they might if the thoughts were projected on the screen at the cinema. You sit, watching the screen, waiting for a thought or image to arise. When it does, you pay attention to it so long as it is there “on the screen,” and then you let it go as it passes away.



Heartfulness Psychotherapy

Mountain Meditation



Picture a majestic mountain, any mountain that you can clearly visualize -the more detailed the visualization the better.

The mountain is standing tall and strong, it has been there for thousands of years.

All around the mountain the weather changes from beautiful sunny skies to hurricane force winds to snow and ice, but the mountain always stands firm -the activity just whirls around the mountain but does not affect it day to day.

Now, sit quietly and focus on your breath going in and out -relax and breath... as the thoughts come in and out of your mind, picture yourself as the mountain -sit up tall and strong like a mountain, firmly grounded to the earth -let the thoughts and the stress and anxiety whirl around you without affecting you, the thoughts of people and situations that are pressuring you are just thoughts and you are a mountain, sitting strong.

You are who you are, who you have always been, regardless of the “weather” happening around you. Sit with that feeling of power and majesty, breath in and out slowly and relax for as long as you feel comfortable doing so.