



Introduction to Body Scan

The body scan is a form of mindfulness meditation. It involves systematically sweeping through the body with the mind, bringing an affectionate, openhearted, interested attention to its various regions.

When we practice the body scan, we are systematically and intentionally moving our attention through the body, attending to the various sensations in different regions. Without moving a muscle, we can put our mind anywhere in the body we choose and feel and be aware of whatever sensations are present in that moment.

Most of the time in our lives we hardly experience ourselves present in our bodies. We usually tune out bodily sensations because they are obvious, mundane, familiar that we hardly notice their presence. Experientially, we might describe what we are doing during a body scan as tuning in or opening to those sensations, allowing ourselves to become aware of what is already unfolding. In the body scan, we are developing a greater intimacy with bare sensation. We open to the give-and-take embedded in the reciprocity between the sensations themselves and our awareness of them. Awareness learns to let the sensations be as they are and to hold them with less judgment and less emotional reactivity.

If you think of your body as a musical instrument, the body scan is a way of tuning it. If you think of it as a universe, the body scan is a way to come to know it. If you think of your body as a house, the body scan is a way to throw open all the windows and doors and let the fresh air of awareness sweep it clean.

It is highly likely that you will find that body scan will bring you to a new appreciation for your body and how much it can serve as a vehicle for embodying here and now what is deepest and best in yourself, including your dignity, your beauty, your vitality, and your mind when it is open and undisturbed.

Note: Excerpted and adapted from “*Coming to Our Senses*” by Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2005, Hyperion Press, NY.