



BODY SCANNING

Feeling.

Duration	10-15 minutes
Material	None or body scanning script/recording
General workshop objectives	Observe their sensations and breathing; Notice the details of the present moment.

Explanation to teachers

You visit amusement parks, you watch sensational videos, you seek out thrills and chills. But when was the last time you stopped to feel the ground under your feet, the softness of the blankets wrapped around you, or the wonder of a beautiful landscape?

It could be that you're missing out on what it's like to really feel. Why not put immediate gratification on the back burner and open yourself up to the little things about people—the details that help us to understand each other and change the way we think about everyday life?

Focusing our attention on our sensations anchors us in the present moment and a induces state of mindfulness. Body scanning is an easy way to practise how to feel. With time, it can evolve, by focusing more attention on different body parts, and last for longer periods.

Body scanning can be done while sitting, lying down, or even standing, if needed. Make sure the students are comfortable and able to move around if they want to. The exercise involves focusing on different body parts in order to notice the sensations that arise, without trying to change them (Baer, 2003).

Tip for facilitators

To lead by example, walk the students through the exercise slowly, tapping into your own sensations at the same time as the students notice theirs.

Good to know...

School is a good place for students to incorporate mindfulness into their daily habits. Several studies have shown that mindfulness is more easily mastered when it is practised between directed activities. The benefits are multiplied when the focus is on frequency rather than duration. Present mindfulness as a form of self-care, rather than a duty or a routine.

(Lucas-Thompson *et al.*, 2018; Mulhearn *et al.*, 2017)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Suggest that the students spread out in the classroom, if possible, and settle into a comfortable position. Body scanning can be done while sitting, lying down, or even standing, if needed. Suggest that they find a spot where they won't be disturbed by the others. Remind them not to feel pressure to stay still throughout the entire exercise. If they feel the need, they can move around a little.
2. Try to create a relaxing atmosphere as much as possible. Turn off the lights and close the curtains, close the door to reduce background noise, etc.
3. Use the script in the complementary sheet to guide the body scanning exercise. If you want, you can lead your own body scanning exercise or use this recording https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Medit_Body-Scan.mp3.
4. If some students find it harder to connect with their physical sensations, encourage them to gently move the body part in question. For example, they could try wiggling their fingers to heighten their sensations and better focus their attention on their fingers. Remind students that there may be times when they feel nothing at all, which is perfectly normal. If that happens, they can focus their attention on their breathing.
5. Finally, lead a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - Did you notice anything specific about your sensations or about your body in general?
 - How would you describe your focus during the exercise? Were you able to keep your focus? Did you fall asleep? Did you feel calmer/more agitated/more impatient?
 - Did you feel differently before and after the exercise?

DIGGING DEEPER

Encourage your students to experiment with body scanning on their own, without relying on a script or outside voice. Some of them might find it easier to observe and feel at their own pace, without being "fed" feelings that they only partially relate to. Encourage them to explore and cultivate this sense of silent observation and grounding in the present moment.

COMPLEMENTARY SHEET

Get into a comfortable position. If you can, lie on your back somewhere where you won't be disturbed. During this exercise, you may or may not relax, and that's perfectly normal. The intention is to become aware of the sensations you can detect when you shift your attention to different parts of your body. *(Pause)*

Start by closing your eyes if you want and taking the time to observe your breathing, without changing it. Observe the movements as you breathe in and out. Focus your attention on the path the air takes as it enters your body, fills your lungs, and flows back out through your nose or mouth. *(Pause)*

Now, shift your attention to your feet. Try to feel their temperature and the contact with your socks or shoes. Maybe you don't feel anything specific, and that's perfectly fine, too. *(Pause)*

Now, shift your attention to your legs. Observe the different sensations from your ankles to your hips. Be aware of their position in space and in relation to the rest of your body. Observe their angle and their contact with the floor, chair or wall, if you are leaning against one. *(Pause)*

If your thoughts start to wander, that's perfectly normal. Simply refocus them on your next inhale.

Now, observe your abdomen, your rib cage and your neck. Maybe you can feel the movements of your breath in that part of your body. Try to notice if you are feeling anything in particular. Again, you may not feel anything at all, which is perfectly fine. *(Pause)*

Now, focus on your arms. Feel your shoulders *(pause)*, your elbows *(pause)*, your hands *(pause)*, your fingers *(pause)*.

Now, notice the feelings in your face, your forehead, your mouth. Maybe you're feeling something in your jaw. Maybe your eyebrows are furrowed. Or maybe you don't feel anything specific in your face. If that's the case, refocus on your breath to stay grounded in the present moment. *(Pause)*

Take a few minutes to reconnect with your surroundings. Yawn, stretch and open your eyes, before slowly reconnecting with what's happening around you.

