



Mindfulness Supplement

BODY SCANNING

Mindful Feeling



Duration	10 to 15 minutes
Materials	None
General workshop objectives	Pay attention to sensations and breathing Anchor yourself in the present moment

EXPLANATIONS FOR TEACHERS

You visit amusement parks, you watch sensational videos, you seek thrills and intensity. But when was the last time you stopped to feel the ground beneath your feet, the softness of blankets, or the wonder of a magnificent landscape?

Maybe you're missing out on what it's like to really feel. Why not put the results and the speed to one side for a moment, and open up to the little details that distinguish individuals, that help us understand each other and change the way we look at everyday life?

Focusing your attention on your sensations gives you access to the present moment and thus to the state of mindfulness. Body scanning is a simple way to train yourself to feel. In fact, it can evolve over time, by focusing attention on different parts of the body, and last longer. The exercise involves paying attention to different parts of the body to observe sensations, without trying to change them (Baer, 2003).

Why observe your sensations?

- To improve body awareness;
- To anchor your awareness in the present moment;
- To learn to feel.



DID YOU KNOW...

The school environment is conducive to allowing students to integrate mindfulness into their daily lives. Moreover, several studies have shown that the learning of mindfulness is greatly enhanced when practice continues between directed activities. Benefits increase when the focus is on frequency rather than duration. You should present mindfulness as a time for self-care, rather than as an obligation or a routine.

(Lucas-Thompson et al., 2019;
Mulhearn et al., 2017)

Facilitation advice

Guide the participants slowly, experimenting with your sensations at the same time as the students, to make the body scan more concrete.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Suggest that students spread out in the classroom, if possible, and settle into a comfortable position. Body scanning can be done sitting, standing or lying down, without any problem. Suggest they move to a place where they'll feel less disturbed by the presence of others. Remind them that they have the right to move gently during the activity, if they feel the need.
2. Take care to create as relaxing an atmosphere as possible. Turn off the lights, close the curtains, close the door to reduce outside noise, etc.
3. Use the *verbatim* presented below to guide the body scan, or use this [audio version](#).
4. If some students find it more difficult to feel what's happening in their body, invite them to gently move the suggested body part. For example, they could lightly activate their fingertips to draw attention to them. Remind students that there may be times when they feel nothing at all, and that this is perfectly okay. In that case, they can focus on their breathing.
5. Conclude the activity with a discussion prompted by the following questions:
 - What did you observe in relation to your sensations or your body as a whole?
 - How was your attention during the exercise? Did your thoughts often drift away or get tangled up like in a whirlpool? How did you feel (calm, restless, impatient, sleepy)?
 - Now that the exercise is over, do you feel anything different, compared to when you started the exercise?

DIVING DEEPER

Suggest that your students experiment with a body scan on their own, without being guided by a text or an outside voice. Perhaps some of them will find it easier and more concrete to observe and feel at their own pace, without the suggestion of sensations that only partly correspond to them. Invite them to explore and cultivate this sense of silent observation and anchoring in the present moment.



SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET - VERBATIM

Make yourself comfortable. During this exercise, you may feel more relaxed, or you may not, and that's okay. Try to become aware of the sensations you experience when observing different parts of your body. *(Pause)*

Start by closing your eyes and concentrating on your breathing, without changing it. Can you feel your belly rise and fall as you breathe? Do you notice how your breath begins to tickle your nose, moves down your throat and fills your lungs, lifting your stomach and collarbones? Then, it comes back on its way out, up through your nose or mouth. Give it your attention for a moment. *(Pause)*

At your own pace, shift your attention to your feet. Take the time to ask yourself what you can observe that's special about this part of your body. Are your feet somewhat cold, or somewhat hot, or normal? Can you feel your socks or shoes covering your feet? Maybe you don't feel anything in particular, and that's perfectly all right too. *(Pause)*

What's going on in your legs right now? Feel them from bottom to top. Are your knees bent or extended? What do you feel in your knees? Are your legs resting on the floor, or on a chair? Can you feel the texture, the effect of this contact with your legs? Take a moment to feel all the little details going on in your legs. *(Pause)*

Maybe your thoughts got lost along the way. It happens and it's normal. Just remind them that they can focus on your next inhalation to help you get back into the present moment.

Now, observe how your stomach, chest and neck feel. Earlier, you concentrated on your breathing movements. Can you do it again a little? Is there anything else you can feel? A gurgling in your stomach, the beating of your heart, some pain or some joy in your belly? What do you feel in your neck and your throat? Again, remember that you may not feel anything at all, and that's okay too. *(Pause)*



When you're ready, I invite you to pay attention to your arms, shoulders and hands. Are your hands closed like fists, or are your fingers extended? *(Pause)* What do you feel in your elbows? Are they resting somewhere, or in the air, folded, or stretched out? *(Pause)* And your shoulders, are they raised close to your ears, or relaxed on either side of your body? *(Pause)* Take time to observe all your sensations, from your fingertips to your shoulders.

Before we finish, how about you turn up your attention to your face? If I asked you to focus on your mouth, eyes and eyebrows, what would you observe? Maybe you feel your eyebrows are furrowed. Maybe you don't feel anything in your face. I suggest you now concentrate on your breathing. *(Pause)*

Slowly, you can now open your eyes, and look around you. Take the time you need to yawn, stretch, and even laugh a little, if you feel like it.

