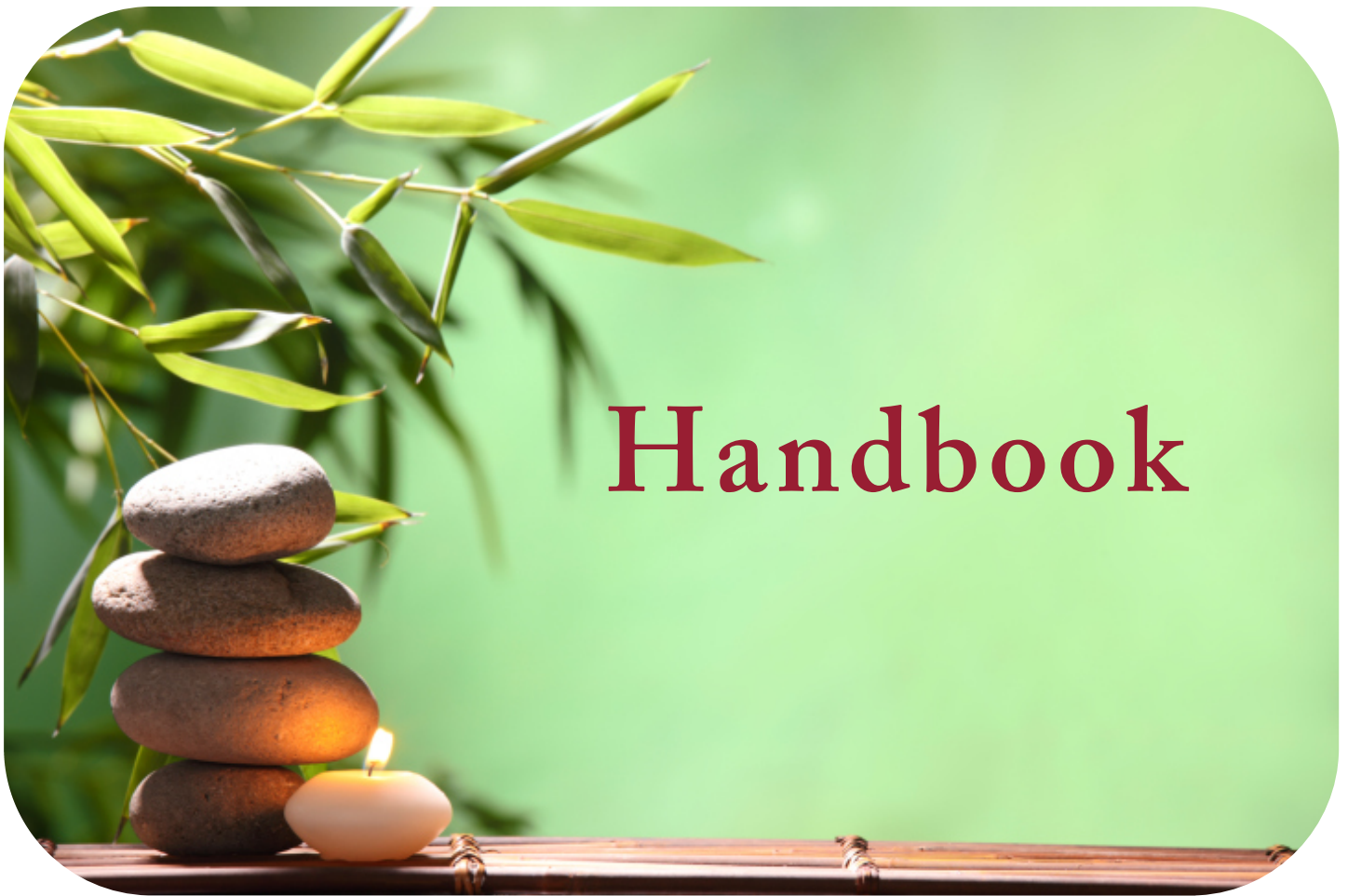


Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program



Handbook

Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives. It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment. We feel more alive. We also gain immediate access to our own powerful inner resources for insight, transformation, and healing.

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D

MBSR Handbook

Table of Contents

MBSR Practice/ Learning Suggestions.....	1
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: An Introduction....	2
Meditation: It's Not What You Think.....	4
The 7 Essential Attitudes of Mindfulness Practice	5
Mindful Eating Suggestions.....	7
The Body Scan Meditation.....	8
Sitting Meditation	11
Overcoming Obstacles to Meditation.....	13
Mindful Yoga.....	14
Walking Meditation.....	18
What is Stress.....	19
STOP: One-Minute Breathing Space.....	23
The RAIN Process	24
Appreciative and Generous Listening.....	25
Mind Traps.....	26
Loving Kindness	27
Suggested Reading.....	28

MBSR: An Introduction

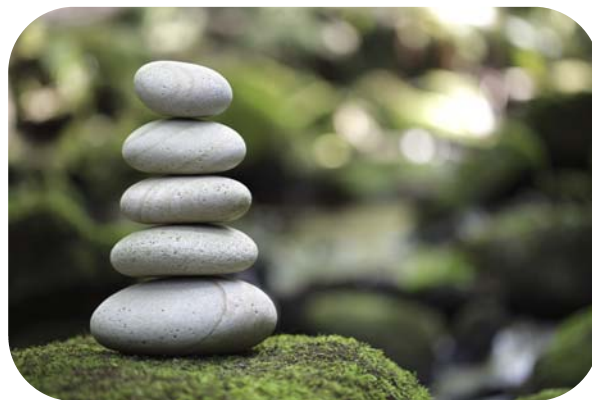
feel a greater sense of control over their lives, an increased willingness to look at stressful events as challenges rather than threats, and a greater sense of meaning in life."

One frustrated participant came to the clinic with this question: "Can a fish know it is in water? I don't think it is possible, because if you take the fish out of the water, it will die." He saw himself as someone immersed in a cloudy mindstew, unable to gain perspective on himself or his world. Was there the possibility that he could see himself and his thought patterns more clearly?

In the practice of mindfulness meditation, one can cultivate the sense of oneself as a present moment awareness that observes the thoughts that arise in the mind and views them as something to be noted, perhaps responded to, but not to be identified with as "me." As one begins to quiet the mind, this view of our thoughts in relation to ourselves can be cultivated more and more deeply, which can result in more clarity about who we really are. When we realize we are not our thoughts, we can explore them more deeply and begin to move into a greater stillness that offers us further information about who we may really be at our core. Just as the ocean has waves on the surface of the water as well as the silent depths below, we too can know the thought patterns on the surface, as well as the quiet depths within. And so, in answer to this patient's question, the fish does have the possibility of knowing something of the water it is in.

In addition to mindfulness meditation in the medical setting, the training has also been broadened in scope to include inmates in the prison system, inner city residents, Olympic rowing athletes, judges, the Chicago Bulls basketball team, corporate executives, as well as grammar school children. Over 240 mindfulness-based stress reduction programs are currently being offered around the country. Instructors vary with respect to their backgrounds, most being health care professionals with teaching and clinical experience in the health field, or having extensive meditation and yoga backgrounds.

Whether we are pressed by serious pain and stress, or simply by a mild sense that things are not as we would like them to be, mindfulness meditation is a tool that allows us to see our world as if standing and looking at the landscape of our own particular life and the world around us from a new vantage point. We can begin to recognize the ways in which we contribute to our own discontent and can decide to make a change. Mindfulness meditation offers that opportunity.



Roberta Lewis is a certified yoga teacher since 1978, trained in Integral Yoga, with several years study in Iyengar Yoga, and training in gentle patient-oriented yoga as offered at the UMass-Memorial Medical Center's Stress Reduction Program founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn. She has been a meditator in the Yoga and Vipassana traditions since 1976. She is trained in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and was a part of the clinical staff of the UMass Stress Reduction Clinic as far back as 1996. At the time this article was written, she taught yoga and MBSR at Listening: The Barre Integrated Health Center in Barre, MA.

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Meditation: It's Not What You Think

It might be good to clarify a few common misunderstandings about meditation right off the bat. First, meditation is best thought of as a way of being, rather than a technique or a collection of techniques.

I'll say it again.

Meditation is a way of being, not a technique.

This doesn't mean that there aren't methods and techniques associated with meditation practice.

There are. In fact, there are hundreds of them, and we will be making good use of some of them. But without understanding that all techniques are orienting vehicles pointing at ways of being, ways of being in relationship to the present moment and to one's own mind and one's own experience, we can easily get lost in techniques and in our misguided but entirely understandable attempts to use them to get somewhere else and experience some special result or state that we think is the goal of it all...

Second, meditation is not relaxation spelled differently. Perhaps I should say that again as well: Meditation is not relaxation spelled differently.

That doesn't mean that meditation is not frequently accompanied by profound states of relaxation and by deep feelings of wellbeing. Of course it is, or can be, sometimes. But mindfulness meditation is the embrace of any and all mind states in awareness, without preferring one to another. From the point of view of mindfulness practice, pain or anguish, or for that matter boredom or impatience or frustration or anxiety or tension in the body are all equally valid objects of our attention if we find them arising in the present moment, each a rich opportunity for insight and learning, and potentially, for liberation, rather than signs that our meditation practice is not "succeeding" because we are not feeling relaxed or experiencing bliss in some moment.

We might say that meditation is really a way of being appropriate to the circumstances one finds oneself in, in any and every moment. If we are caught up in the preoccupations of our own mind, in that moment we cannot be present in an appropriate way or perhaps at all. We will bring an agenda of some kind to whatever we say or do or think, even if we don't know it...

For meditation, and especially mindfulness meditation, is not the throwing of a switch and catapulting yourself anywhere, nor is it entertaining certain thoughts and getting rid of others. Nor is it making your mind blank or willing yourself to be peaceful or relaxed. It is really an inward gesture that inclines the heart and mind (seen as one seamless whole) toward a full-spectrum awareness of the present moment just as it is, accepting whatever is happening simply because it is already happening...

Meditation is not about trying to get anywhere else. It is about allowing yourself to be exactly where you are and as you are, and for the world to be exactly as it is in this moment as well. This is not so easy, since there is always something that we can rightly find fault with if we stay inside our thinking. And so there tends to be great resistance on the part of the mind and body to settle into things just as they are, even for a moment. That resistance to what is may be even more compounded if we are meditating because we hope that by doing so, we can effect change, make things different, improve our own lives, and contribute to improving the lot of the world...

So, from the point of view of awareness, any state of mind is a meditative state. Anger or sadness is just as interesting and useful and valid to look into as enthusiasm or delight, and far more valuable than a blank mind, a mind that is insensate, out of touch. Anger, fear, terror, sadness, resentment, impatience, enthusiasm, delight, confusion, disgust, contempt, envy, rage, lust, even dullness, doubt, and torpor, in fact all mind states and body states are occasions to know ourselves better if we can stop, look, and listen, in other words, if we can come to our senses and be intimate with what presents itself in awareness in any and every moment. The astonishing thing, so counterintuitive, is that nothing else needs to happen. We can give up trying to make something special occur. In letting go of wanting something special to occur, maybe we can realize that something very special is already occurring, and is always occurring, namely life emerging in each moment as awareness itself.

Excerpted from the book *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness*
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MBSR Practice/ Learning Suggestions

In order to realize the benefits of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, please consider . . .

. . . making a personal commitment to MBSR practice for 45-60 minutes daily at least 6 days per week for the next 8 weeks. Your commitment is essential. It is the practice of mindfulness meditation that will enable you to realize its benefits. This commitment can be a challenging one, and may require a lifestyle change. You may have to rearrange your schedule to allow time for daily practice, carving out time from other activities. Once you taste the benefits of MBSR, then you may find that maintaining a daily practice becomes easier and highly rewarding.

. . . making a personal commitment to practice mindfulness in daily living (informal mindfulness practice). We can bring mindfulness to eating, walking, driving, interpersonal relationships, anytime throughout the day. This conscious act of remembering and bringing attention to the present moment and simple activities throughout the day, enhances your formal meditation practice. Both formal and informal practice are just that, practice at being fully present to each moment as life unfolds just as it is.

. . . putting goal attainment on hold. Putting aside any desire to use MBSR to reach a certain objective (e.g., relaxation, pain relief, inner peace) will allow you to fully experience a primary part of the program, which is “non-doing” or “non-striving.”

. . . approaching your practice with an attitude of kindness, compassion, gentleness, openness and inquisitiveness toward yourself and others. Your role is to just observe, developing a deeper awareness.

. . . sharing relevant events, materials or experiences for the good of the group. You are invited to share, in whatever manner you are most comfortable, a brief summary or copy of an article, book, poem, movie, idea, story or anything that is relevant to the formal or informal practice of mindfulness or stress management. This information may be shared during any session.

. . . practicing the specific weekly assignments as suggested in the workbook

You may choose, now, to make a commitment to yourself to practice the techniques learned in this class over the next eight weeks.

MBSR: An Introduction

Does not a day go by that many of us don't wonder how we manage to juggle the pieces of our lives and honorably hold up our responsibilities to family, friends, work, our health, our financial well-being, as well as lead full and satisfying lives? It sometimes doesn't take much to unsettle the delicate balance of forces that constellate as our world, sending it off into a wobble, leaving us struggling to right the course. How do we find a way back?

One route is in practicing mindfulness-based stress reduction. Intensive training in mindfulness meditation can cultivate states of relaxation, improve physical symptoms of pain and chronic illness, open our minds to greater insight, and enhance our physical health and sense of well-being for fuller, more satisfying lives. The course originated twenty years ago with Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., founder of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the Center for Mindfulness at UMassMemorial Medical Center in Worcester. This form of meditation practice stems primarily from the Buddhist tradition and was intended as a means of cultivating greater awareness and wisdom, helping people to live each moment of their lives as fully as possible. While some forms of meditation involve focusing on a sound or phrase in order to reduce distracting thoughts, mindfulness training does the opposite. In mindfulness meditation, you don't ignore distracting thoughts, sensations or physical discomfort, rather, you focus on them.

An integral part of mindfulness practice is to look at, accept and actually welcome the tensions, stress and pain, as well as disturbing emotions that surface such as fear, anger, disappointment and feelings of insecurity and unworthiness. This is done with the purpose of acknowledging present moment reality as it is found - whether it is pleasant or unpleasant - as the first step towards transforming that reality and one's relationship to it.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction, also includes the practice of yoga. Yoga encourages musculoskeletal strength, flexibility and balance, as well as inner stillness. It can both relax and energize. Applied in conjunction with mindfulness techniques, yoga is a gentle but powerful form of body-oriented meditation. With continued practice, one can begin to fully inhabit the body, pay closer attention to its fluctuating states and learn to cultivate an early warning system for the presence of stress, tension or pain. With an attitude of mindfulness to both body and mind states, one has more information to work with in potentially handling the day-to-day stressful events in life.

Can thoughts in the mind and tension in the body actually have the capacity to produce bodily symptoms? There is growing evidence that by implementing mind/body techniques, the mind and body are capable of relaxing, new perspectives can be gained, and new ways of coping with one's life can be achieved that can impact symptoms - like gastritis. Dean Ornish, M.D., author of Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease, provides scientific proof in his landmark research demonstrating, for the first time, that even severe heart disease often can be reversed by practicing meditation, yoga, changing one's diet and participating in group support.

Research on the impact of mindfulness meditation on a variety of symptoms including anxiety disorder, chronic pain and psoriasis has been conducted over the past 20 years by Dr. Kabat-Zinn. He states that "participants report a sharp drop over the eight week course in the number of medical symptoms originally reported, as well as psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and hostility. These improvements occur reproducibly in the majority of participants in every class. They also occur regardless of diagnosis, suggesting that the program is relevant to people with a wide range of medical disorders and life situations."

He also notes, "In addition to having fewer symptoms, people experience improvements in how they view themselves and the world. They report feeling more self-confident, assertive and motivated to take better care of themselves and more confident in their ability to respond effectively in stressful circumstances. They also

The 7 Essential Attitudes of Mindfulness Practice

The following “attitudes” are at the core of mindfulness practice and living. Learning to notice, cultivate and apply these attitudes, moment by moment and day by day, is what improves our ability to face fear, anxiety, panic and depression; decrease our suffering; and nurture our sense of peace and well-being. Although addressed separately for teaching purposes, they are interconnected and practicing one leads to increased awareness and understanding of the others.

1. NON-JUDGING: Mindfulness is compassionate, openhearted, choiceless awareness. It is cultivated by witnessing your own experience, without judgment, as the present moment unfolds. Categorizing and judging experiences is no more than a habit, but it locks you into automatic, reactive patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that perpetuate problems rather than helping. Often we aren’t even aware that these patterns exist! Judging separates us from direct experience of the unfolding of our lives in each moment. In practicing mindfulness, it’s important to recognize the judging quality of mind and identify the judgmental thinking as it arises. It is equally important to not judge the judging! Simply notice when it is present. Remember – the goal is to simply notice, not to rid yourself of judging thoughts. That is an unrealistic goal. By noticing that judgment is present, we then have the opportunity to learn new ways to relate to it, choosing a response rather than reacting unconsciously.

2. PATIENCE: Patience is the ability to bear difficulty with calm and self-control. It requires connection with your core, faith and courage. It also requires kindness and compassion for yourself as you bear the upset of a situation. Impatience often arises when ego, the self-centered part of self, rails against reality, wanting things to be different than they actually are. In contrast, the wise self recognizes the truth that things have a life cycle of their own, separate from your own wants. As you learn to accept this truth, your patience grows. To build patience, you must learn to recognize impatience and the urge to rush through one moment to get to the next.

3. BEGINNER’S MIND: When you begin to observe the present moment, the thinking mind tends to believe it knows all about what is happening or tries to “control” by desperately seeking more information. The activity of thinking forms a filter or barrier between you and direct experience of life – it is in the unfolding of life moment by moment that holds the full richness of life. To practice beginner’s mind means to open to the experience of each moment as if meeting it for the first time. Remember and imagine your experience as a child – the first smell of a flower, the first drop of rain, the first taste of an orange. In truth, each moment in life is unique. You may have experienced the sunset a thousand times, but this particular sunset is different from the rest and will never be again. In practicing mindfulness, you are asked to cultivate this quality of direct experience, receiving whatever arises as a unique and precious experience. Practicing beginner’s mind cultivates our ability to experience life in this way.

4. TRUST: A basic part of learning to meditate is learning to trust yourself and your feelings. You learn to trust that you can see clearly what is actually happening to you. Practicing mindfulness deepens your awareness of, sensitivity to and accuracy in discerning what is here now, what is happening in your own body, and what is happening around you. You learn to trust your own knowing, your own authority, and don’t need someone else to tell you what you feel and need. In this process, you discover what it really means to be your own person and to live life with authenticity.

5. NON-STRIVING: The bulk of human activity is spent “doing” and trying to change things. This “habit” frequently shows up in meditation. The ego mind wants more of what it likes and wants to get rid of what it doesn’t like, and when it decides that you aren’t the way you “should” be, it even pressures you to change yourself! This pressure is felt as striving, or straining to be different, go somewhere else, or do something else.

The 7 Essential Attitudes of Mindfulness Practice

Since mindfulness involves simply paying attention, without judgment, to whatever is happening, it is different from this more typical activity of doing – it is about “nondoing,” about learning to “be” instead of do. As you are practicing or living mindfulness and feel a sense of striving or trying to change things, simply notice that without judging yourself. Mindfulness is about truly relaxing into your experience and allowing whatever is happening to happen, bringing clear, compassionate awareness to it as it happens. The paradox of meditation is that the best way to achieve your goal is to let go of striving and, instead, focus carefully on seeing and accepting things as they are, moment to moment.

6. ACCEPTANCE: The process of acceptance begins with the willingness to see things exactly as they are rather than the way that you think they should be. You have to see things as they are and yourself as you are – truly – in this moment if you wish to change, heal, or transform yourself or your life. Often to be able to accept what comes into awareness, you must pass through periods of intense feelings such as anger, fear, or grief. These feelings themselves require acceptance. Acceptance does not mean you have to like everything or take a passive attitude. It does not mean you have to be satisfied with things as they are, or that you have to stop trying to change things for the better. Rather acceptance simply means willingness to see things as they are, deeply, truthfully, and completely. This attitude sets the stage for acting in the moment in the most potent and healthy way, no matter what is happening. You are more likely to know what to do when you have a clear picture of what is actually happening than when your vision is clouded by your mind’s self-serving judgments and desires or its fears and prejudices.

7. LETTING GO: Letting go, or nonattachment is another key attitude of mindfulness. Much of the time, we are practicing the opposite attitude, clinging to the way we want things to be, without even knowing it. Often, what you cling to most strongly are ideas and views about yourself, others and situations. These ideas that we cling to often shape our moment-to-moment experience in profound ways. When we start paying attention to our experience through meditation, we can discover which thoughts, feelings and sensations we are trying to hold onto. And we will also notice other things that we want desperately to get rid of. Clinging is driven by our likes and dislikes and our judgments. It is important to just let your experience be what it is, moment by moment. This letting be is actually a way of letting go. By not interfering, by just letting things be, you have a better chance to let go.

Adapted from *Full Catastrophe Living*
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Mindful Eating- Suggestions

Eat slower

Eating slowly doesn't have to mean taking it to extremes. Still, it's a good idea to remind yourself, and your family, that eating is not a race. Taking the time to savor and enjoy your food is one of the healthiest things you can do. You are more likely to notice when you are full, you'll chew your food more and hence digest it more easily, and you'll probably find yourself noticing flavors you might otherwise have missed.

Savor the silence

Eating in complete silence may be impossible for a family with children, but you might still encourage some quiet time and reflection. Again, try introducing the idea as a game — "let's see if we can eat for two minutes without talking" — or suggesting that one meal a week be enjoyed in relative silence. If the family mealtime is too important an opportunity for conversation to pass up, then consider introducing a quiet meal or snack time into your day when you can enjoy it alone.



Silence the phone. Shut off the TV.

Our daily lives are full of distractions, and it's not uncommon for families to eat with the TV blaring or one family member or other fiddling with their iPhone. Consider making family mealtime, which should, of course, be eaten together, an electronics-free zone. I'm not saying you should never eat pizza in front of the TV, but that too should be a conscious choice that marks the exception, not the norm.

Pay attention to flavor

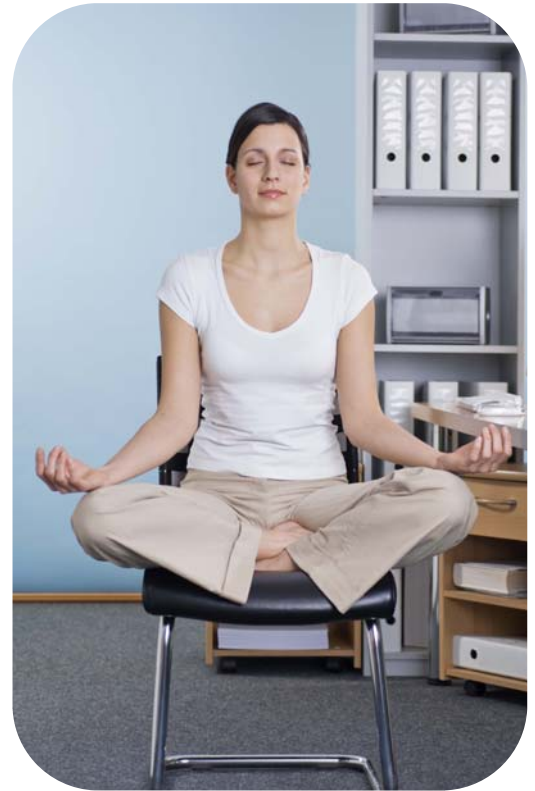
The tanginess of a lemon, the spicyness of arugula, the crunch of a pizza crust — paying attention to the details of our food can be a great way to start eating mindfully. After all, when you eat on the go or wolf down your meals in five minutes, it can be hard to notice what you are even eating, let alone truly savor all the different sensations of eating it. If you are trying to introduce mindful eating to your family, consider talking more about the flavors and textures of food. Ask your kids what the avocado tastes like, or how the hummus feels. And be sure to share your own observations and opinions too.

Know your food

Mindfulness is really about rekindling a relationship with our food. From planting a veggie garden through baking bread to visiting a farmers market, many of the things we locavores have been preaching about for years are not just ways to cut our carbon foodprint, but also connect with the story behind our food. Even when you have no idea where the food you are eating has come from, try asking yourself some questions about the possibilities: Who grew this? How? Where did it come from? How did it get here? Chances are, you'll not only gain a deeper appreciation for your food, but you'll find your shopping habits changing in the process too.

The Body Scan Meditation

The body scan has proven to be an extremely powerful and healing form of meditation. It forms the core of the lying down practices that people train in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. It involves systematically sweeping through the body with the mind, bringing an affectionate, openhearted, interested attention to its various regions, customarily starting from the toes of the left foot and then moving through the entirety of the foot – to sole, the heel, the top of the foot – then up the left leg, including in turn the ankle, the shin and the calf, the knee and the kneecap, the thigh in its entirety, on the surface and deep, the groin and the left hip, then over to the toes of the right foot, the other regions of the foot, then up the right leg in the same manner as the left. From there, the focus moves into, successively, and slowly, the entirety of the pelvic region, including the hips again, the buttocks and the genitals, the lower back, the abdomen, and then the upper torso – the upper back, the chest and the ribs, the breasts, the heart and lungs and great vessels housed within the rib cage, the shoulder blades floating on the rib cage in back, all the way up to the collarbones and shoulders. From the shoulders, we move to the arms, often doing them together, starting from the tips of the fingers and thumbs and moving successively through the fingers, the palms, and backs of the hands, the wrists, forearms, elbows, upper arms, armpits, and shoulders again. Then we move in to the neck and throat, and finally, the face and head.



When we practice the body scan, we are systematically and intentionally moving our attention through the body, attending to the various sensations in the different regions. That we can attend to these body sensations at all is quite remarkable. That we can do it at will, either impulsively or in a more disciplined systematic way, is even more so. 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.

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, much of which we usually tune out because it is so obvious, so mundane, so familiar that we hardly know it is there, I mean here. And of course, by the same token we could say that most of the time in our lives we hardly know we are there, I mean here, experiencing the body, in the body, of the body . . . the words actually fail the essence of the experience. When we speak about it, as we've already observed, language itself forces us to speak of a separate I who "has" a body. We wind up sounding hopelessly dualistic.

And yet, in a way there certainly is a separate I who "has" a body, or at least, there is a very strong appearance of that being the case, and we have spoken of this as being the level of conventional reality, the relative, the level of appearances. In the domain of relative reality, there is the body and its sensations (object), and there is the perceiver of the sensations (subject). They appear separate and different.

Then there are moments of pure perceiving that arise sometimes in meditation practice, and sometimes at other very special moments in life. Yet such moments are potentially available to us at all times, since they are attributes of awareness itself. Perceiving unifies the apparent subject and apparent object in the experiencing itself. Subject and object dissolve into awareness. Awareness is larger than sensation. It has a life of its own separate from the life of the body, yet intimately dependent on it.

Awareness is deeply bereft, however, when it does not have a full body to work with due to disease or injury to the nervous system itself. The intact nervous system provides us with all of our extraordinary gateways into the

The Body Scan Meditation

feeling, sensing world. Yet. Like most everything else, we take these capacities so much for granted that we hardly notice that every exquisite moment of our life in relationship, both inwardly and outwardly, depends on them. Not only might we come more to our senses, we might realize that we only know through our senses, if you include the mind, or awareness itself as a sense – you could say, the ultimate sense. . .

It is not uncommon while practicing the body scan for the sensations in the body to be felt more acutely, even for there to be more pain, a greater intensity of sensation in certain regions. At the same time, in the context of mindfulness practice, the sensations, whatever they are and however intense, are also being met more accurately too, with less overlay of interpretation, judgment and reaction, including aversion and the impulse to run, to escape.

In the body scan, we are developing a greater intimacy with bare sensation, opening to the give-and-take embedded in the reciprocity between the sensations themselves and our awareness of them. As a result, it is not uncommon to be less disturbed by them, or disturbed by them in a different, a wiser way, even when they are acute. Awareness learns to let them be as they are and to hold them without triggering so much emotional reactivity and also so much inflamed thinking about them. We sometimes speak of awareness and discernment differentiating and perhaps naturally “uncoupling” the sensory dimension of the experience of pain from the emotional and cognitive dimensions of pain. In the process, the intensity of the sensations themselves can sometimes subside. In any event, they may come to be seen as less onerous, less debilitating.

It seems as if awareness itself, holding the sensations without judging them or reacting to them, is healing our view of the body and allowing it to come to terms, at least to some degree, with conditions as they are in the present moment in ways that no longer overwhelmingly erode our quality of life, even in the fact of pain or disease. The awareness of pain really is a different realm from being caught up in pain and struggling with it, and setting foot in that realm, we discover some succor and respite. This is itself is an experience of liberation, a profound freedom in that moment, at least from a narrower way of holding the experience of pain when it is not seen as bare sensation. It is not a cure by any means, but it is a learning and an opening, and an accepting, and a navigating the ups and downs of what previously was impenetrable and unworkable. . .



Paraphrasing James Joyce in one of his short stories in Dubliners, “Mr. Duffy lived a short distance from his body.” That may be an address too many of us share. Taking the miracle of embodiment for granted is a horrific loss. It would be a profound healing of our lives to get back in touch with it. All it takes is practice in coming to our senses, all of them.

And . . . a spirit of adventure. . .

The body scan is not for everybody, and it is not always the meditation of choice even for those who love it. But it is extremely useful and good to know about and practice from time to time, whatever your circumstances or condition. 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

The Body Scan Meditation

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.

You can also scan your body much more quickly, depending on your time constraints and the situation you find yourself in. You can do a one in-breath or one out-breath body scan, or a one-, two-, five-, ten-, or twenty-minute body scan. The level of precision and detail will of course vary depending on how quickly you move through the body, but each speed has its virtues, and ultimately, it is about being in touch with the whole of your being and your body in any and every way you can, outside of time altogether.

You can practice body scans, long or short, lying in bed at night or in the morning. You can also practice them sitting or even standing. There are countless creative ways to bring the body scan or any other lying down meditation into your life. If you make use of any of them, it is highly likely that you will find that they will bring new life to you, and 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.

Physical sensations you might notice with the body scan

tingly	burning	pounding	throbbing	trembling	light/heavy
tight/loose	shooting	stinging	airy	cutting	tense/relaxed
soft/rough	prickly	pulling	burning	vibrating	cool/warm
stiff/flexible	numb	numb	achy	sinking	clammy/dry
airy/dense	shaky	itchy	pulsing	achy	dull/sharp

Emotional reactions you might notice

impatience/wanting to stop	neutral	enjoyment/wanting to continue			
release	joy	sadness	fear	grief	pride
disgust	surprise	anger	frustration	anticipation	shame

Thoughts that may occur

Reviewing the past	Imagining the future	Thinking about others
Planning	Evaluating/analyzing	Circular thinking
Wishing/hoping/comparing	Labeling/cataloguing	Judging your experience

Coming to Our Senses
©2005 Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D

Sitting Meditation

We call the heart of the formal meditation practice “sitting meditation” or simply “sitting.” As with breathing, sitting is not foreign to anyone. We all sit, nothing special about that. But mindful sitting is different from ordinary sitting in the same way that mindful breathing is different from ordinary breathing. The difference, of course, is your awareness.

To practice sitting, we make a special time and place for non-doing. We consciously adopt an alert and relaxed body posture so that we can feel relatively comfortable without moving, and then we reside with calm acceptance in the present without trying to fill it with anything. You have already tried this in the various exercises in which you have watched your breathing.

It helps a lot to adopt an erect and dignified posture, with your head, neck, and back aligned vertically. This allows the breath to flow most easily. It is also the physical counterpart of the inner attitudes of self-reliance, self-acceptance, and alert attention that we are cultivating.

We usually practice the sitting meditation either on a chair or on the floor. If you choose a chair, the ideal is to use one that has a straight back and that allows your feet to be flat on the floor. We often recommend that, if possible, you sit away from the back of the chair so that your spine is self-supporting (see Figure A). But if you have to, leaning against the back of the chair is also fine. If you choose to sit on the floor, do so on a firm, thick cushion which raises your buttocks off the floor three to six inches (a pillow folded over once or twice does nicely; or you can purchase a meditation cushion, or zafu, specifically for sitting).



There are a number of cross-legged sitting postures and kneeling postures that some people use when they sit on the floor. The one I use most is the so-called “Burmese” posture (see Figure B), which involves drawing one heel in close to the body and draping the other leg in front of it. Depending on how flexible your hips and knees and ankles are, your knees may or may not be touching the floor. It is somewhat more comfortable when they are. Others use a kneeling posture, placing the cushion between the feet (see Figure C).

Whether you choose the floor or a chair, posture is very important in meditation practice. It can be an outward support in cultivating an inner attitude of dignity, patience, and self-acceptance. The main points to keep in mind about your posture are to try to keep the back, neck, and head aligned in the vertical, to relax the shoulders, and to do something comfortable with your hands. Usually we place them on the knees, as in Figure 2, or we rest them in the lap with the fingers of the left hand above the fingers of the right and the tips of the thumbs just touching each other.

When we have assumed the posture we have selected, we bring our attention to our breathing. We feel it come in, we feel it go out. We dwell in the present, moment by moment, breath by breath. It sounds simple, and it is. Full awareness on the in-breath, full awareness on the outbreath. Letting the breath just happen, observing it, feeling all the sensations, gross and subtle, associated with it.

It is simple but it is not easy. You can probably sit in front of a TV set or in a car on a trip for hours without giving it a thought. But when you try sitting in your house with nothing to watch but your breath, your body and your mind, with nothing to entertain you and no place to go, the first thing you will probably notice is that at least part of you doesn’t want to stay at this for very long. After perhaps a minute or two or three or four, either the body or the mind will have had enough and will demand something else, either to shift to some other posture or to do something else entirely. This is inevitable.

Sitting Meditation

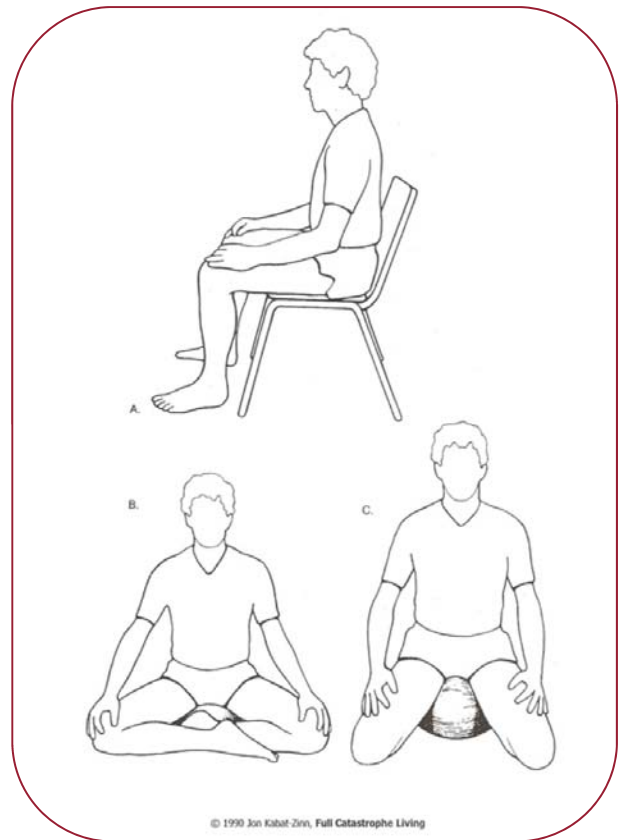
It is at this point that the work of self-observation gets particularly interesting and fruitful. Normally every time the mind moves, the body follows. If the mind is restless, the body is restless. If the mind wants a drink, the body goes to the kitchen sink or the refrigerator. If the mind says, “This is boring,” then before you know it, the body is up and looking around for the next thing to do to keep the mind happy. It also works the other way around. If the body feels the slightest discomfort, it will shift to be more comfortable or it will call on the mind to find something else for it to do, and again, you will be standing up literally before you know it.

If you are genuinely committed to being more peaceful and relaxed, you might wonder why it is that your mind is so quick to be bored with being with itself and why your body is so restless and uncomfortable. You might wonder what is behind your impulses to fill each moment with something; what is behind your need to be entertained whenever you have an “empty” moment, to jump up and get going, to get back to doing and being busy? What drives the body and mind to reject being still?

In practicing meditation we don't try to answer such questions. Rather we just observe the impulse to get up or the thoughts that come into the mind. And instead of jumping up and doing whatever the mind decides is next on the agenda, we gently but firmly bring our attention back to the belly and to the breathing and just continue to watch the breath, moment by moment. We may ponder why the mind is like this for a moment or two, but basically we are practicing accepting each moment as it is without reacting to how it is.

By doing so you are training your mind to be less reactive and more stable. You are making each moment count. You are taking each moment as it comes, not valuing any one above any other. In this way you are cultivating your natural ability to concentrate your mind. By repeatedly bringing your attention back to the breath each time it wanders off, concentration builds and deepens, much as muscles develop by repetitively lifting weights. Working regularly with (not struggling against) the resistance of your own mind builds inner strength. At the same time you are also developing patience and practicing being nonjudgmental. You are not giving yourself a hard time because your mind left the breath. You simply and matter-of-factly return it to the breath, gently but firmly.

Meditation does not involve pushing thoughts away or walling yourself off from them to quiet your mind. We are not trying to stop our thoughts as they cascade through the mind. We are simply making room for them, observing them as thoughts, and letting them be, using the breath as our anchor or “home base” for observing, for reminding us to stay focused and calm.



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Overcoming Obstacles in Meditation

Here are five obstacles that have been in people's way for thousands of years and the antidotes to get over them.

1. **Doubt** – The uncertainty about whether something will “work” or not often plagues many people in the beginning of their practice. The thought is, “this can work for others, but it won't work for me.” Sometimes doubt is healthy, teaching us to look closely at things before we buy them. But the unhealthy doubt just takes us away from experience before it teaches us anything.

Antidote: We have to remember that thoughts are just thoughts; they're not facts (even the ones that say they are). When we notice this doubt slipping in, just take note of it, perhaps even notice the fear that is often underneath it, and then gently return back to the practice.

2. **Restlessness** – Let's face it, it's hard to sit still for a period of time when the mind can be so busy. We're trained from a young age to do, do and do some more. The mind may rebel a bit when learning how “to be.” You might catch it running through a million to-do lists and try and count the minutes until the end of the practice. This is all completely natural.

Antidote: It's important to recognize that restlessness and boredom are just sensations like any other. If you look deeply at restlessness or boredom, underneath it is often some form of anxiety or fear. But you don't need to investigate it to reduce its impact, just naming it as you recognize it can really reduce its impact. You might even try adopting a beginner's mind and getting curious about the sensation of restlessness. This is how you get back in the driver's seat.

3. **Irritation** – Getting irritated occurs for many reasons. Maybe we don't feel like we're having a good meditation experience or there's an annoying noise in the room or it's a secondary emotion that comes after feeling restless. In other words, we're irritated that we're so restless in the practice.

Antidote: While our urge is to resist the irritation, we have to remember the old adage “what we resist persists.” The work here is to include it as part of the mindful experience. As the chapter goes in *The Now Effect*, “It is what it is, while it is.” Our work is to recognize the irritation, allow it to be there and we can either investigate it deeper or watch as it naturally comes and goes.

4. **Sleepiness** – Being the sleep deprived nation that we are, it's easy to feel a bit sleepy when we come down from our busy minds. Our body does what it naturally wants to do, go to rest. We also feel sleepy sometimes when an experience is overwhelming, so it's good to be curious whether the tiredness is telling you that you need more rest or that there's a feeling that needs to be expressed.

Antidote: If from time to time you fall asleep when meditating, consider it a good nap that you needed. However, if this is happening often you might try sitting in a more upright posture, standing up, having your eyes slightly open or maybe splashing some water on your face before starting.

5. **Wanting** – You'll notice when you practice that your mind may fall into a state of wanting to be somewhere else than where you are. Or maybe it's even more innocent of just wanting to get a bite to eat and so the mind starts drifting onto different food topics. Or before you even get to practice your mind wants to conditions to be different than they are so you don't even get to practice. This state of mind can either stop us from practicing or ignite restlessness, irritation and others.

Antidote: If you notice this state of mind before you practice, you might consider what you *can* practice instead of what you *can't* practice. For example, in a noisy place, the [Sky of Awareness](#) practice from *The Now Effect* would do quite nicely. If the mind is busy wanting to be somewhere else during the practice, see if you can be easy on yourself, simply continuing to notice the thoughts straying and gently bringing your attention back. If it continues to be a strong pull, maybe intentionally shift your practice to being aware of thoughts like in the [Movie in Your Mind](#) practice.

Ultimately, having a regular mindfulness meditation seems so simple, but practice isn't always easy. We have our brains to contend with that throws up all these obstacles. Even if you just made it your intention to be on the lookout for these obstacles and apply the antidotes as best you can, that would be an extremely beneficial practice. Be forgiving of yourself as you go and remember you can always begin again.

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Uncovering Happiness www.elishagoldstein.com

Mindful Yoga

Many of us are reluctant to exercise because it involves discomfort or strain, or requires special equipment or others to work out with, or going to a special place to do it. If this has been the case for you, then mindful hatha yoga may be just the practice you have been waiting for.

The word “Yoga” means “yoke” in Sanskrit, and implies a harnessing together and unifying of body and mind. Yoga is a form of meditation, and when done regularly, is an excellent mind/body discipline for people who wish to move towards greater levels of health.

Hatha yoga consists of postures done mindfully and with awareness of breathing. They are easily learned and have dramatic effects if practiced regularly. The ones we are doing are extremely gentle. Regular practice will increase your musculoskeletal flexibility, strength, and balance, as well as help you to enter states of deep relaxation and awareness. Many people experience a greater serenity about life in general, improved circulation, a firmer, trimmer figure, and less illness as a result.

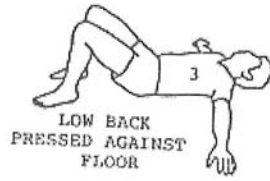
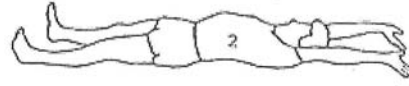
In practicing yoga, you are advised to practice in the same way that you do when meditating, namely maintaining moment to moment awareness, and not striving to get somewhere, just allowing yourself to be as you are, and letting go of any judging of yourself. Move slowly and consciously. Mindful yoga involves exploring your limits but not pushing beyond them. Instead, you play with dwelling at the boundary and breathe. This requires honoring your body and the messages it gives you about when to stop and when to avoid doing a posture because of your particular condition.

Yoga requires no special equipment and can be done almost anywhere. You can learn it from the Stress Reduction Program Manual sketches and then go on to invent your own postures, and get other ideas from yoga books or from classes. Experiment mindfully.

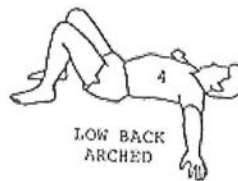
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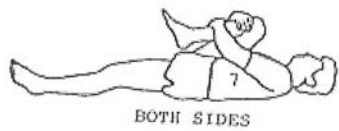
Mindful Yoga Poses



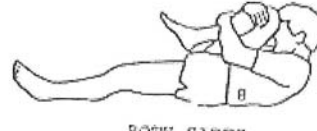
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PRESSED AGAINST
FLOOR



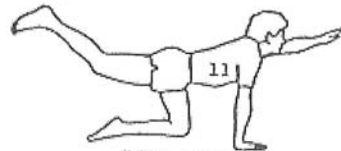
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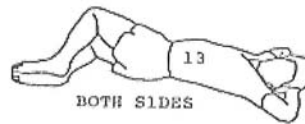
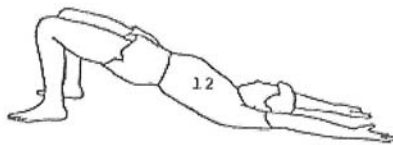
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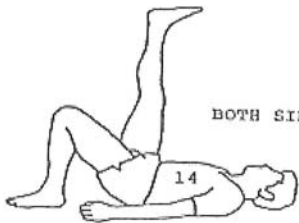
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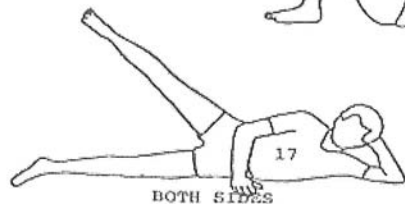
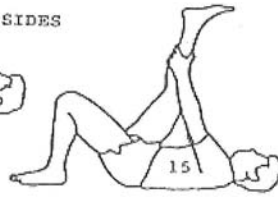
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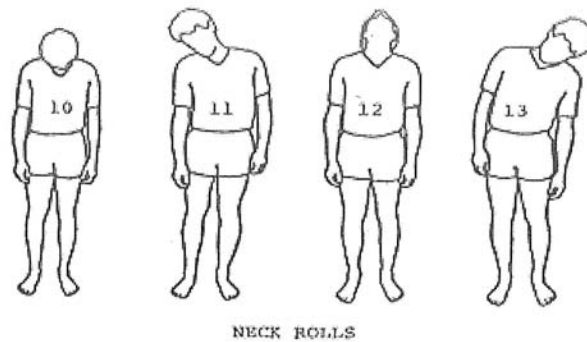
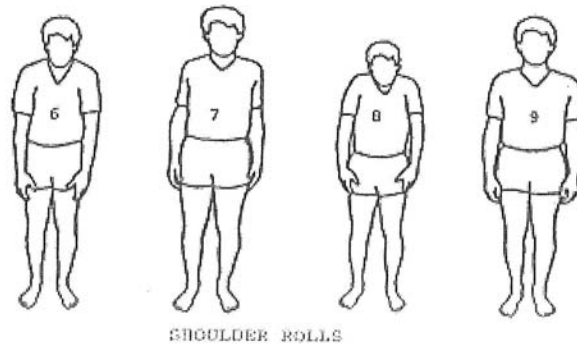
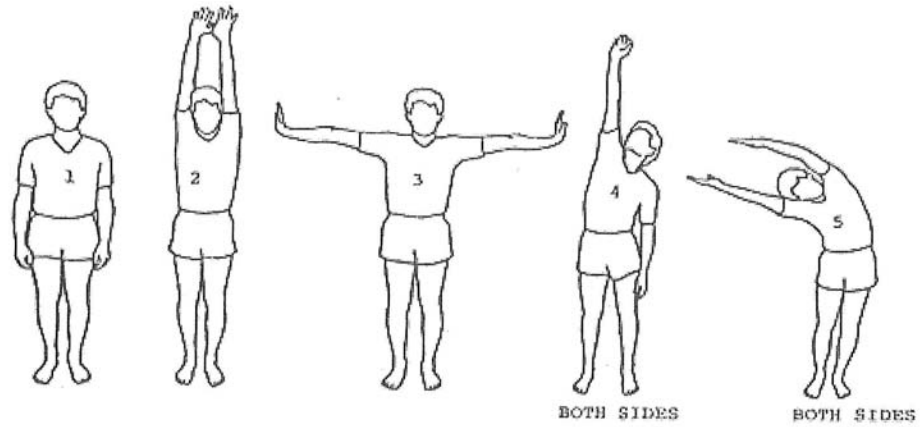
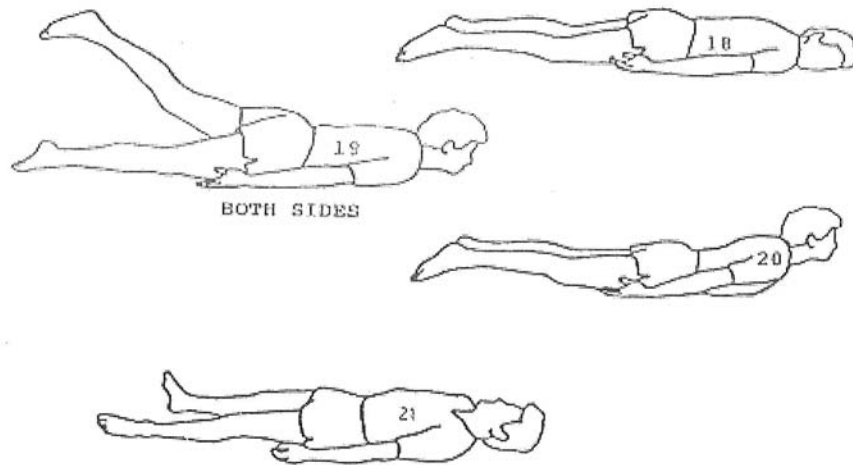


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Mindful Yoga Poses



Mindful Yoga Poses



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Walking Meditation

Like breathing meditation, walking meditation is a simple and universal practice for developing calm, connectedness and awareness. It can be practiced regularly, before or after sitting meditation or any time on its own, such as after a busy day at work or on a lazy Sunday morning. The art of walking meditation is to learn to be aware as you walk, to use the natural movement of walking to cultivate mindfulness and wakeful presence.

Select a quiet place where you can walk comfortable back and forth, indoors or out, about ten to thirty paces in length. Begin by standing at one end of this “walking path” with your feet firmly planted on the ground. Let your hands rest easily, wherever they are comfortable. Close your eyes for a moment, center yourself and feel your body standing on the earth. Feel the pressure on the bottoms of your feet and the other natural sensations of standing. Then open your eyes and let yourself be present and alert.

Begin to walk slowly. Let yourself walk with a sense of ease and dignity. Pay attention to your body. With each step, feel the sensations of lifting your foot and leg off the earth. Be aware as you place each foot on the earth. Relax and let your walking be easy and natural. Feel each step mindfully as you walk. When you reach the end of your path, pause for a moment. Center yourself, carefully turn around, pause again so that you can be aware of the first step as you walk back. You can experiment with the speed, walking at whatever pace keeps you most present.

Continue to walk back and forth for ten or twenty minutes or longer. As with the breath in sitting, your mind will wander away many, many times. As soon as you notice this, acknowledge where it went softly: “wandering,” “thinking,” “hearing,” “planning.” Then, return to feel the next step. Like training the puppy, you will need to come back a thousand times. Whether you have been away for one second or for ten minutes, simply acknowledge where you have been and then come back to being alive here and now with the next step you take.

After some practice with walking meditation, you will learn to use it to calm and collect yourself and to live more wakefully in your body. You can then extend your walking practice to an informal way when you go shopping, whenever you walk down the street or walk to from your car. You can learn to enjoy walking for its own sake instead of the usual planning and thinking and, in this simple way, begin to be truly present, to bring your body, heart and mind together as you move through your life.

Jack Kornfield
A Path With Heart

What Is Stress?

There Are Reasons We Experience Stress

Stress is a physical expression of our “Fight or Flight” survival mechanism. A threatening situation will trigger a stress response, which prepares us to confront or flee a possible danger. This helps for immediate danger but unfortunately the stress response is also triggered by tense situations where physical action is not an option, such as unreasonable boss, heavy traffic, or financial problems.

Two types of stress

1. Acute - Acute stress prepares us for fight or flight, and is generally short-term.
2. Chronic – Chronic stress is long term and is the main cause of stress-related health problems.

Stress causes chemical changes in the body that, left unchecked, can have negative effects on both mental and physical health. High levels of stress contribute to health issues as diverse as depression, insomnia, heart disease, skin disorders and headaches.

Acute Stress in Detail

Acute stress is a short-term response by the body’s sympathetic nervous system. How long acute stress lasts may vary—the response can last for a few minutes or a few weeks. During an acute stress response, the adrenal medulla (part of the adrenal glands, two small glands located on top of each kidney) begins to release catecholamine hormones (including adrenaline and noradrenaline). In all, over seventeen different hormones are released during an acute stress response.

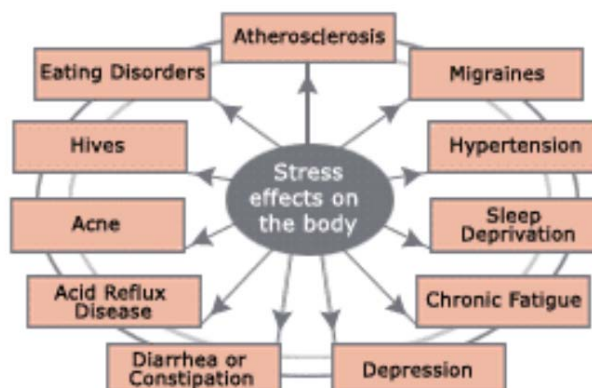
Physical responses

- blood sugar levels rise
- additional red blood cells are released (to carry extra oxygen)
- peripheral blood vessels constrict
- pulse quickens
- blood pressure rises
- digestion stops

Chronic Stress in Detail

Chronic stress occurs when continuous acute stress responses keep the body on alert continuously, negatively affecting health. The ongoing stress response causes the hypothalamus and pituitary gland (portions of the brain) to release a chemical known as ACTH (adrenocorticotropic hormone). ACTH, known as the “stress hormone” stimulates the adrenal gland to produce and release cortisol.

Cortisol is one of the hormones associated with waking and sleeping. Levels of cortisol naturally fluctuate during the day. Cortisol levels are highest in the morning and lowest at night. Higher levels of cortisol in the morning help us wake up. When chronic stress stimulates cortisol production, the daily cycle of cortisol levels is disrupted. High levels of cortisol may occur at night. This can result in insomnia.



What Is Stress?

Stress Affects Your Health

Imbalances of cortisol and other stress-related hormones weaken health over time and the effects are not immediately seen. Practicing stress management techniques can help minimize the effects of stress on your health.

High Levels of Stress (Cortisol) Contributes to Weight Gain

Cortisol promotes the synthesis of glucose from proteins in order to make more glucose available as fuel in response to stressful situations. This reduces lean muscle mass and increases blood sugar levels. Research has shown that cortisol also increases the deposition of abdominal fat and increases cravings for food, especially carbohydrates (sugars). This helps to set up the vicious cycle of stress and overeating (especially of unhealthy foods), which created more stress and more overeating, etc. By supporting a person's adrenal glands and lowering cortisol output, this vicious cycle can be broken.

<http://commit2bfit.me/what-we-do/stress-less/what-is-stress-what-can-i-do-about-it/>

..



The Stress-Reaction Cycle

External Stress Events
(stressors)



Perception
Appraisal

Cardiovascular
Musculoskeletal
Nervous System
Immune System
↑ ↑ ↑
Internal Stress
Events

fight or flight
alarm reactivity

Stress Reaction
hypothalamus
+ pituitary +
adrenals

acute hyperarousal
BP ↑, pulse rate ↑

Internalization:
inhibition of the
stress reaction

chronic hyperarousal
HBP
arrhythmias
sleep disorders
chronic headaches, backaches...
anxiety

Maladaptive
Coping

self-destructive
behaviors

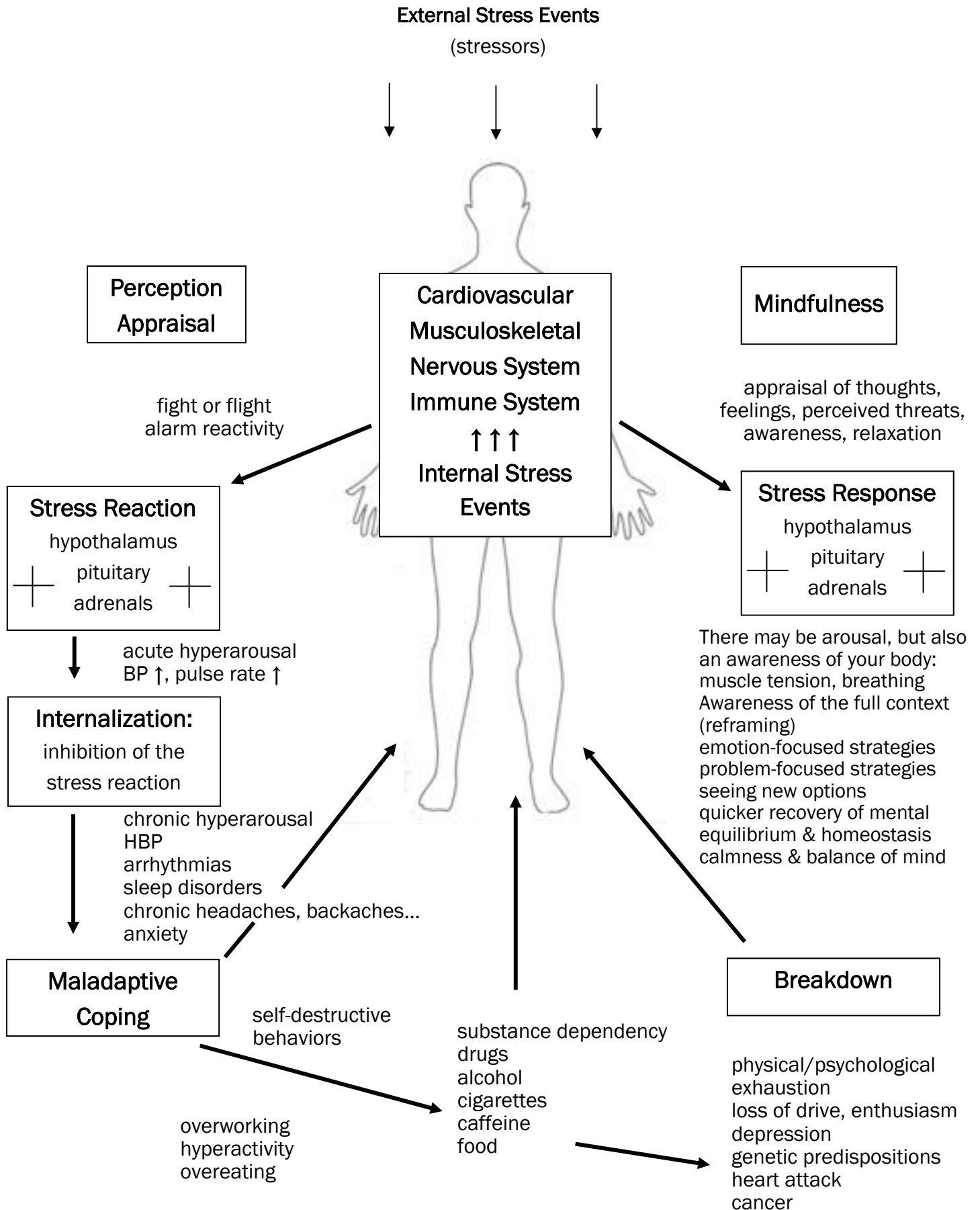
overworking
hyperactivity
overeating

Breakdown

substance dependency
drugs
alcohol
cigarettes
caffeine
food

physical/psychological
exhaustion
loss of drive, enthusiasm
depression
genetic predispositions
heart attack
cancer

Coping with Stress: Responding vs. Reacting



One-Minute Breathing Space



Haven't there been times when you just needed some "breathing space"? This practice provides a way to step out of automatic pilot mode and into the present moment. What we are doing is creating a space to reconnect with your natural resilience and wisdom. You are simply tuning in to what is happening right now, without expectation of any particular result. If you remember nothing else, just remember the word "STOP".

S Stop and Take Stock. Checking in to head/heart/body.
Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately asking:

What is my experience right now?

Head: Thoughts... (What are you saying to yourself? What images are coming to mind?)

Heart: Feelings... (Enjoying, not enjoying, neutral, upset, excited, sad, mad, etc.)

Body: Sensations... (Actual present-moment sensations, tightness, holding, lightness)

Acknowledge and register your experience, even if it is uncomfortable.

T Take a Breath. Directing awareness to breathing.
Gently direct full attention to breathing, to each inbreath and each outbreath as they follow, one after the other.

Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.

O Open and Observe. Expanding awareness outward.
Expand the field of your awareness around and beyond your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression, then further outward to what is happening around you: sights, sounds, smells, etc. As best you can, bring this expanded awareness to the next moments.

P Proceed/ New Possibilities. Continuing without expectation.
Let your attention now move into the world around you, sensing how things are *right now*. Rather than react habitually/mechanically, you can be curious/open, responding naturally. You may even be surprised by what happens next after having created this pause.

The RAIN Process



The description of this process, below, is mostly in Tara Brach's own words and is taken from her article, *Finding True Refuge*. This is similar to the STOP process, in that it begins with a pause to take stock of what's happening (like the "ST" of STOP) and ends with opening into the Natural Awareness (like the "OP" of STOP) that can happen after pausing and gently inquiring within. Where it differs from "STOP" is that it goes beyond a pause and brings a gently investigation into what is happening inside.

R Recognize what is happening

You can awaken recognition simply by asking yourself "What is happening inside me right now?" Call on your natural curiosity as you focus inward. Try to let go of any preconceived ideas and instead listen in a kind, receptive way to your body and heard, and bring awareness to whatever thoughts, emotions, feelings or sensations are arising right here and now.

A Allow life to be just as it is

Allowing means "letting be" the thoughts, emotions, feelings or sensations you discover. You may feel a natural sense of aversion, of wishing that unpleasant feelings would go away, but as you become more willing to be present with "what is", a different quality of attention will emerge. Allowing is intrinsic to healing, and realizing this can give rise to a conscious intention to "let be."

I Investigate inner experience with kindness

Investigation means calling on your natural interest - the desire to know the truth - and directing a more focused attention to your present experience. Simply pausing to ask, "What is happening inside me?" might initiate recognition, but with investigation you engage in a more active and pointed kind of inquiry. You might ask yourself, "What most wants attention?", "How am I experiencing this in my body?", "What am I believing?" or "What does this feeling want from me?" We need to offer a gentle welcome to whatever surfaces. This is why I use the phrase "Investigate with kindness." Without this heart energy, investigation cannot penetrate; there is not enough safety and openness for real contact.

N Natural Awareness (or Non-identification).

The first three steps of RAIN require some intentional activity. In contrast, the N of RAIN expresses the result: a liberating realization of your natural awareness. There's nothing to do for this last part of RAIN- the realization arises spontaneously, on its own. We simply rest in natural awareness.

Appreciative and Generous Listening

Listening is not passive.

To contain the distractions one's brain will generate requires a mindful and generous stance to become a non-judgmental, non-analytical presence for the speaker.

Consider the following techniques:

- Give the speaker your undivided attention
- Be present in the moment (“Pure Presence”) and enjoy listening
- Be quiet and calm without hurry or interruptions
- Silence is allowed as a means of reflection
- Focus on what is true for the speaker at the moment
- Suspend judgment and listen openly
- Listen to the words & the underlying perceptions, beliefs and assumptions
- Attentive body language through soft eye contact, leaning forward slightly, open body stance
- Non-verbal encouragers such as head nods, concerned / responsive facial expressions
- Express empathy when appropriate
- Judicious use of clarifying / reflecting / detailing questions
- Paraphrase what the speaker has said when they are done
- Don't talk about your own experiences or ideas



Mind Traps

- **All-or-nothing thinking:** You see things in black-or-white categories. If a situation falls short of perfect you see it as a total failure.
- **Overgeneralization:** You see a single negative event, such as a romantic rejection or a career reversal, as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as “always” or “never” when you think about it.
- **Mental filter:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that your vision of all of reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors a beaker of water.
- **Discounting the positive:** You reject positive experiences by insisting that they “don’t count.” If you do a good job, you may tell yourself that it wasn’t good enough or that anyone could have done as well. Discounting the positive takes the joy out of life and makes you feel inadequate and unrewarded.
- **Jumping to conclusions:** You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusion.
- **Mind reading:** Without checking it out, you arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you.
- **Fortune-telling:** You predict that things will turn out badly.
- **Magnification:** You exaggerate the importance of your problems and shortcomings, or you minimize the importance of your desirable qualities. This is also called the “binocular trick.”
- **Emotional reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are.
- **“Should” statements:** You tell yourself that things should be the way you hoped or expected them to be.
- **Labelling:** Labelling is an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking. Instead of saying “I made a mistake,” you attach a negative label to yourself.
- **Personalization and blame:** Personalization occurs when you hold yourself personally responsible for an event that isn’t entirely under your control.



Loving Kindness Meditation

Gaining a sense of yourself, and cradling the sense of yourself in your awareness, repeat these words silently to your own sense of self:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

Maybe it seems artificial and stilted to say such things to yourself, for yourself. Maybe you're not feeling loving kindness in this moment - and that's okay. Whatever you're feeling, you can hold the intention of loving kindness... offering it from wherever you are... however you are now...

So practicing once more, noticing how you may be drawn towards this practice or away from it:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

Now develop an image or felt sense of your chosen one to come to the forefront of your thinking:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

And now exploring the experience of moving loving kindness outward again, bringing to your heart and mind someone to whom you feel neutrally towards- neither disliking nor liking them and offering these wishes:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

Now, moving towards a person who you dislike or is difficult to deal with. Holding them in your awareness and sending loving kindness with these phrases... or phrases of your own...

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease (Long pause).

Now we will expand this out further ... gain a sense of your family and / or local neighborhood and community and hold this, with a sense of yourself included and repeat

May we be safe
May we be happy
May we be healthy
May we live with ease

Now gain a sense of all sentient beings in your world and as you have this sense repeat silently to yourself again:

May we be safe
May we be happy
May we be healthy
May we live with ease



Suggested Reading

Full Catastrophe Living

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Published by Delta; ISBN 0385303122

Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Published by Hyperion; ISBN 0786880708

Coming to Our Senses Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Published by Hyperion; ISBN 0786867566

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Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Viktor E. Frankl