Body Scan Mindfulness Exercise

1. Sit in a chair as for the breath awareness or lie down, making yourself comfortable, lying on your back on a mat or rug on the floor or on your bed. Choose a place where you will be warm and undisturbed. Allow your eyes to close gently.

2. 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 chair or bed. On each outbreath, allow yourself to let go, to sink a little deeper into the chair or bed.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 or bed). 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. You can adjust the time spent in this practice by using larger chunks of your body to become aware of or spending a shorter or longer time with each part.
What is your Sense of Humor IQ?

Take this Humor Inventory and find out!

Judith Belmont, MS,

www.belmontwellness.com

Do you know anyone who loves to laugh? No matter how serious the situation, this person seems to find something to laugh about? We are not extolling the virtues of nervous laughter—pretending things are great when they are not. Rather, it is the ability to see the lightness and silver lining in every cloud that gives us lightness. Laughter makes life more fun, more enjoyable, more playful. Children have little problem laughing and playing. Why is it often so hard for adults to play and laugh? After all, no one else takes you so seriously, why should you?

As the adage goes, “Laughter is the shock absorber that eases the blows of life.”

The following questions will help you take stock of your “humor inventory.”

Rate each item on the scale from 1-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>False</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Do you take yourself way too seriously?
2. Are you too busy to find the humor in things?
3. Are you involved with “important things” to look at the funny side of life?
4. Are you worried about what others think about you?
5. On average, I do not laugh a lot.
6. There is not much that strikes me as funny
7. I have not had a “good laugh” in quite some time.

Total Score and Divide by 7:

Total Score __________ Divide by 7 __________ equals your score

Where does your score fall?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Interpretation of your numeric score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Superb: Your Humor Quotient is unusually high! Keep up the good work!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Very Good: You have a very good ability to see the lightness in life!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Average: Your Humor Quotient could use some boosting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Needs Work: Look for more opportunities to lighten your load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Needs a lot of Work: Life is too serious to be taken so seriously! Try to find more lightness in your life! If your mood is low, consider getting professional help.</td>
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What was your score? What are some ways that you can improve your Humor Quotient?