

Mindful Breathing and Muscle Relaxation - Practice

The main goal of mindful breathing is to be more aware of the present moment, allowing your thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them.

Sit or lie somewhere comfortable and close your eyes.

Bring your attention to your breathing. Breathing in.... Breathing out.... In.... Out....

Imagine that you have a balloon in your stomach. Each time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates. Notice the sensations in your stomach as the balloon inflates and deflates. Your stomach rising as you breathe in... falling when you breathe out.... In.... Out.... In.... Out.... (Pause for a few breaths...)

Keep breathing in... and out... It's totally normal for thoughts to come into your mind, and for your attention to follow them. This is just what our minds do. If you notice your mind has wandered off then gently bring your attention back to your breathing. Focusing on breathing in... breathing out, in...out... (pause for a few breaths...)

You might notice sounds, or physical feelings, or emotions. Again, just bring your attention back to your breathing, with the balloon inflating and deflating as you breathe in and out. You don't have to follow those thoughts or feelings or analyse them in any way. They are just thoughts. Just notice them and then let them drift off, bringing your attention back to your breathing, breathing in... breathing out (pause for a few breaths...)

Thoughts will come into your mind. Just notice those thoughts, then bring your attention back to your breathing, breathing in... breathing out (pause for a few breaths...)

Whenever you notice your attention has drifted off your job is to just notice that your attention has drifted and then gently bring it back to your breathing, with the balloon inflating and deflating as you breathe in and out, in and out (pause for a few breaths...)

Slowly take a deep breath in....and then breathe out slowly. Let the tension float away as you relax more and more with each breath... slowly in...slowly out...in... out...

Now turn your attention to the top of your head. Feel the relaxation beginning, imagine it as a warm or tingly sensation at the top of your scalp, focus on it spreading slowly downwards.... Feeling your face and ears becoming more relaxed and heavy.... Relax your jaw and let your mouth fall open slightly if you can... enjoy the feeling of relaxation you are experiencing.

Now bring your focus on to your neck.... feel the relaxation at the top of your neck, nice and warm... feel it flow downwards into your shoulders, feeling your shoulders gently sinking downward as they get more and more relaxed.... feeling very relaxed and heavy....

Feel the relaxation flowing into the muscles in your shoulders and back... feeling warm and relaxed....

Bring your attention back to your breathing again... focus on how regular it is now... breathing in... and out... in... and out... taking slow.... deep breaths... Breathing in the relaxation... and breathing out any tension... in... out. You are feeling more and more relaxed.... deeply relaxed.....

Now feel the relaxation flowing from your shoulders and into your arms.... allow your arms to relax... allow your hands to become loose and relaxed... let the tension and stress float away.... imagine the tension flowing right out your finger tips.....

Feel the relaxation moving to your chest and over your stomach.... becoming deeper with each breath....more and more relaxed....

Let your hips relax.... imagine the relaxation moving to the tops of your legs... flowing down to your knees... your calves and shins.... your ankles.... down to your feet.... allow all the muscles to go limp....

Imagine any last bits of tension to flow out the soles of your feet.... Feel the relaxation flowing through your body... From the top of your head... down through your body to your feet.... Bring your attention back to your breathing again... becoming more relaxed with each breath... breathing in... and out... in slow.... deep breaths... Breathing in the relaxation... and breathing out any tension... in... out

Focus on the feeling of relaxation throughout your body.... Notice your relaxed muscles and slow breathing...Enjoy relaxing for a few moments more.... When you are ready to return to your day slowly begin to open your eyes... Feeling calm and relaxed.

Take a few more slow breaths and then begin to open your eyes again.