

**Journey through the body in the mind’s eye**

*This focuses on taking a mental ‘walk’ through each part of the body in turn. The aim is to* ***let go*** *of any unnecessary muscle tension,* ***allowing*** *the body to feel more comfortable and rested.*

Checking that your position is comfortable before we begin. Bring your attention to your breathing, not trying to control the breath but noticing that the inward breath is cooler than the outward breath. The outward breath is the relaxing breath. If you feel comfortable closing your eyes.

Begin by taking your attention to your head. Checking that the position of your head is comfortable-

* That it is not tilted more to one side than the other
* If you are sitting on a chair without a headrest be aware of your chin being parallel to the floor and not jutting forward.

Imagining a weight on the top of your head and then that weight being removed. Feeling the sense of release.

Allowing the scalp and the ears to feel comfortable – no tensions in the scalp. Letting that feeling melt down over the forehead – letting go of any furrows there - leaving the forehead clear and smooth.

Moving your attention to the area around the eyes, the eyelids, and the eyes themselves. Being aware of the eyelids resting very gently over your closed eyes. Noticing the eyes – comfortable within their sockets.

Allowing that feeling to melt down through the cheeks. If you find it helpful – imagining that you can see your face from the inside. Being aware at this moment in time there is no need for you to ‘put on a face for the world’ or have any expression there.

Letting that feeling move through your lower jaw – letting it slacken a little – moving the jaw from side to side may help loosen it. Noticing the tongue resting in the floor of your mouth against the lower teeth. You may notice the lips and teeth are hardly touching.

Letting the awareness move down through your throat – swallowing if you feel the need to.

Moving the attention from your throat – around to the back of your neck. Checking again that your head is in a comfortable position.

From your neck allow your awareness to move out across the shoulders – letting them release away from your ears. You may be aware of more space between the ears and shoulders.

Letting your awareness move down through the whole length of both arms – through the upper arms which can be heavy and loose – through the elbow joints – (just checking that the position of your arms at the elbow joint is comfortable) – through the lower arms, the wrists, the hands – backs of the hands, palms of the hands – right to the tips of each single one of the fingers and the thumbs.

It may be helpful at this point to put a little extra attention (but without effort) just into noticing where the hands are resting – noticing the stillness in the hands – fingers resting comfortably – not scrunched up or stretched out. Feeling the fabric against which your hands are resting – hands comfortable and heavy.

Moving your attention back through the arms to the shoulders – beginning to be aware of where your back is touching the chair. Feeling the support beneath you – you may wish to wriggle your back against the chair to ensure that it feels comfortable and supported.

Noticing now that there is little movement in the upper chest. Again, thinking of the outward breath as the relaxing breath. You may wish to place your hands on your abdomen – feeling where the breath moves the body.

Moving your attention down through the pelvis – over the hips to your bottom. Being aware of the surface on which you are sitting. Noticing the support of the chair beneath you – being aware of your weight – evenly distributed.

From here allowing your attention to move down through the whole length of both legs – the upper legs – feeling their weight on the surface beneath, through the knees –it may help the legs to feel more comfortable if the knees roll very slightly outwards. Moving your attention through the lower legs – the calf muscles – allowing them to feel heavy and taking that feeling through to the ankles, the feet – tops of the feet – soles of the feet – right to the tips of each of the toes – whole length of both legs from hips to toes – comfortable and rested.

If your feet are on the floor – putting your attention down into your feet – imagining seeing the imprint of your feet in your shoes. Feeling the fabric of the surface beneath your feet. Being aware of the connection between your feet through your shoes to the solid floor beneath.

You may wish to take this mental journey through the body for a second time – releasing any remaining tension with an outward breath.

Considering then, the whole body – not thinking about the body as separate parts – but capturing the whole-body experience – feeling comfortable, supported and rested.

Focusing on these feelings for a while, the whole body feeling relaxed and supported. You are not working at all. Letting all the tension go.

Staying quietly like this, if after half a minute your mind is busy and active, checking up on each part of your body and letting it relax….

Now allowing any feelings of heaviness to lift. Releasing the heaviness and allowing the body to feel comfortable and rested.

Then slowly beginning to return your attention to the room, becoming aware of any noises in the room. You may wish to begin to move your fingers and toes, to stretch, yawn, wriggle and have a lazy look around you. So, opening your eyes when you feel ready. Saying to yourself “I will keep this feeling of calm/peace/tranquility for as long as I can” Then moving and speaking and breathing a little more gently than usual.

*Relaxation can help to promote feelings of general well-being. It is helpful to look on any relaxation you do, not as a chore, but as an enjoyable means of being more in control of how you feel.* Julie Milton 10/8/20