

Compassionate Body Scan

- Find a comfortable position with a posture of dignity.
- Take a few moments to settle and center yourself, using the practice of listen to the sounds around you, noticing places when your body touches itself (eyelids) or other objects (the chair or floor), or attending to the in-breath and out-breath. Come into the present moment. Let go of regrets about the past or worries about the future.
- Bring attention to the head, eyes, and jaw, allowing any tension to soften. Rest here for a few moments, taking it all in. If you notice pain or emotional discomfort, bring kind and loving attention to that part of your body.
- Move into the neck and throat, allowing them to soften, bringing soothing attention to any tightness or discomfort.
- Continue down into the shoulders and chest, filling your body with kindness. Notice any discomfort and invite it to soften. Bring a gentle and kind attention to any pain or emotion. Don't fight or resist, let it be as it is. Bring attention to both of your arms simultaneously, from the upper arms down to the fingertips. If this is a difficult time for you, let your hand rest on your heart, feeling this soothing and comforting touch.
- Continue with the belly, back, and pelvis, bringing kind, compassionate attention to every part of your body. If difficult feelings arise, either return to your breath or try repeating some loving-kindness phrases: *May I be safe. May I be healthy. May I be peaceful. May I live with ease.* Or try other variations, such as: *May I be free from inner and outer harm* or *May I love myself completely, just as I am.* If you like, you can simplify the sequence to just the key words: *safe...healthy...peaceful...ease.* Let these words land, receive them. Let them nourish you.
- If you come up against a strong dislike of any part of the body, try saying in the kindest tone you can: *May I love and accept my body just as it is. May I bring kindness and compassion to this body.*
- Bring kind attention to the thighs, knees, ankles, and feet, appreciating all that your body does and how hard it works for you. If you get distracted, return to the phrases or the breath. If you feel overwhelmed by a feeling associated with a particular area, you can bypass this part of your body and return to it when you are ready.
- End with compassion for your entire body, with all its scars, imperfections, discomforts, or illnesses. See if you can appreciate this body, loving it as it is right now.
- When you are ready, stretch, wiggle fingers and toes, rotate wrists and ankles, and open your eyes. See if you can carry an attitude of self-compassion into your next activity.

Adapted from *Sitting Together: Essential Skills for Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy* by Susan M. Pollak, Thomas Pedulla, and Ronald D. Siegel (Guilford Press, 2014). pp. 105-106.