

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Tense and Relax Body Scan

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It is important to give ourselves a chance to pause and relax. Here is a body scan activity to help you become more aware of how your body feels when it is tense and when it is relaxed.

Give yourself five to ten minutes in a quiet spot. Get comfortable wherever you are, either lying down or sitting. If you are sitting, you should be sitting up straight, but not rigid. Your feet should be uncrossed and flat on the floor. Your shoulders should be relaxed. As you move through this activity, remember you should never be in pain or uncomfortable. Stop and relax if you are.

Take a deep breath in and slowly exhale. Keep breathing as you move through this activity, never holding your breath.

Starting with your feet, tighten them. Feel the tension in them. Hold it for a moment, then relax. Wiggle your toes and let the tension flow out of them.

Moving up to your legs, tighten your calves and hold for a moment. Now relax your calves. Feel the difference between tension and relaxation.

Repeat this as you move up to your upper legs and hips. Tighten and hold for a few seconds, then release.

Now your lower back and abdomen, tighten those. Remember to breathe. Now relax. Tighten your chest and shoulders. Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears. Remember to breathe. Now release.

Move down to your hands. Tighten your hands into fists. Hold it. Now release. Wiggle your fingers, let them be loose.

Now on to your arms, tighten those. Breathe. Now release. Tighten your neck and jaw, clench your teeth. Relax. Move your jaw gently back and forth.

Finally, tighten your face. Tighten all the muscles in your face, squeeze your eyes shut, and scrunch up your nose. Now relax.

Take a big, deep breath in and hold it. Now a big, cleansing exhale. Do that one more time. A deep inhale in, as much air as you can, filling up your lungs. Now blow it all out, emptying your lungs.

Continue to breath and feel your body and take a moment to reflect.

Did it feel good to pause?

How do you feel mentally, physically, and emotionally?

Do you feel tension anywhere in your body? Take note of any areas that still feel tense and give them gentle attention as you go through your day.

Did you feel any emotions? If so, make note of those.