

"THE BODY SCAN"

Dr. Fran M. Pinault ND, LAc

The body scan technique is an excellent way to identify when you are stressed and where you hold stress in your body. You can then proceed to release the held stress. Practiced over time, you may find you consistently hold stress in certain parts of your body. This technique will help you change that pattern.

When you first begin doing this technique you may want to be lying down or sitting comfortably in a place you will not be disturbed. A good time to learn this is when you get into bed at night. Soon you will be practicing this technique anywhere, at work, while driving, even while talking to colleagues or in meetings.

The Technique:

- While lying down with your eyes closed, try to relax your body as much as possible. Start by gently placing your attention on your feet and ankles. You may want to focus on one foot at one time. "Feel" for any tension in your feet. Are they achy? Tender? Do they feel relaxed? If tension is present focus your attention there and allow the tension dissolve. Coax them into relaxation.
- Moving upward, place your attention on your leg muscles, your calves. Is tension present in this area? Do they feel tight? If so, again with gentle attention, send them the message to relax. Just allow the tension melt away.
- Next, move to your knees, then thighs, and then pelvic area. Our pelvic muscles hold a lot of tension from sitting or standing for long periods of time. Also, the first and second chakras are in the pelvic region. These correlate to our relationships with others and our purpose in life.
- Continue to move upward, through the abdomen, then chest. Open the heart area with gentleness and love. Acknowledge your being, and your divinity. Open the heart chakra with gratitude and warmth, you deserve it! Know that you are in loving relationship with life.
- Moving through the throat, relax your vocal box, and know you have the ability to communicate to others with eloquence and grace.
- Lastly, relax all your facial muscles and tongue, letting all tension melt away.

BREATHING EXERCISE

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People do not often realize they do not breathe with full capacity of their lungs. This is important as they lungs serve us in two important ways: they provide us with oxygen needed for almost all cellular processes in the body, and the lungs expel toxic molecules. It is believed that of all the organs of detoxification (lungs, colon, kidneys, skin, liver) **the lungs can accomplish up to 80% of detoxification that occurs in the body.** Shallow breathing can also contribute to feeling fatigued through the day.

The Technique:

- Start by lying down and try to relax your body as much as possible.
- Note your breathing: does your chest rise and fall? Does your abdomen rise and fall? Does your breath feel deep or shallow?
- With a smooth, deep breath allow your abdomen to first rise and expand as you inhale. Then as you near the end of the inhalation allow your chest to rise.
- With each inhalation take in as much air as possible, allowing both the abdomen, then chest to rise as much as they can with the abdomen rising first, and the chest rising second.
- With the exhalation the order is the same. As you exhale allow your abdomen to fall first then allow the chest to fall. Breathing in - abdomen rises first, then chest. Breathing out - the abdomen falls first then chest. Soon you will develop a rhythmic ebb and flow to your tidal volume!
- Practice this exercise whenever possible. While in your car at stoplights or at work remember to take a breather! This exercise will help you feel more energy, and heal your lung tissue faster as you stop smoking. As you go through this program try substituting this breathing exercise for a cigarette while on break. Learning this will help you after you quit smoking to replace the habit of breathing in smoke

