

Transcript: Mindfulness Check-In

Health Care Provider:

This is a brief mindfulness check-in exercise. During this exercise you will pay attention to your senses for a few minutes. To begin, find a comfortable position. If you're sitting, place your feet flat on the ground if possible; and sit with a straight, but not stiff, back with your neck and head in line with your spine. Settle into your position and, if you're willing, close your eyes for the rest of the exercise; otherwise, relax your gaze on a point in front of you.

We will begin by exploring various sensations you might be having in your body, such as differences in temperature, pressure, tingling, tightness, or tension. At any point in this exercise, if you, due to injury or loss of limb, cannot feel any sensations in certain areas, feel free to explore sensations in other areas of your body or your breath until you can join the exercise again. You can first notice your feet on the ground. Feeling the ground support you. You can move up from your feet to your lower legs, noticing what's there – any physical sensations. From there move to your knees, your upper legs, with the back of your legs making contact with your chair. Then move to your hips and to your lower back, your abdomen, your upper back, and your chest, feeling your breath and the other sensations in your torso. Then you can notice your shoulders, your upper arms, down through your elbows and forearms, and wrists. Your palms and fingers. And all the various sensations there. Then move back up your arms and shoulders to your neck, noticing your jaw, your lips, your nose, cheeks, ears, eyes and area around your eyes, your forehead, the sides of your head and back of your head, and then the top of your head. And for a moment, sit here and notice all the sensations occurring in your body.

Now you can shift your attention to the sounds in the area you're in. Notice what sounds you can hear. Some might be close, some might be further away, some might be distant. Some may be constant, and some may be occasional. Just notice those sounds, and then notice the changes in the sounds.

Lastly, bring your attention to your breath. You may notice your breath in your nose as the air comes in and out. Or in your throat. Or your chest or your abdomen as they expand and contract with each breath. Pick one of those areas of your body, and simply notice the breath moving in and out of your body. Just notice it as it flows in and out, somewhat like waves on the shore.

And to wrap up this exercise, imagine what the environment looked like before you closed your eyes. When you're ready, you can slowly blink, and open your eyes. As you go throughout your day, remember that attending to in-the-moment sensations like physical sensations, sounds, or your breath can be a helpful way to recenter yourself.