

you down and bring you more into the slowness of 'body-time' and out of the speed of the mind. This brings a little more of that quality of 'being' into what you are 'doing'.

'Being' mode...

This doesn't necessarily mean being 'happy' or 'relaxed'. It is rather allowing and making space for each moment as it is – not demanding yourself or the world to be different. It is being gently focused on your experience and allowing it to arise, allowing it space- allowing yourself to just **be**.





Mindfulness in Practice

A comprehensive mindfulness programme

Week 2: STRESS (20 min)

This is an example of a guided meditation, which will be available as an audio or video recording.

This is a guided body scan and breath meditation for you to do on a daily basis in Week 2 of the course, preferably in a calm and quiet place. It will help you to cultivate a new relationship to stress outside of the practice, in your daily life.

We're going to use the breath and body as a way to feel a little more grounded and gain a new perspective of stressful triggers in our life. The breath is an immediate and natural way to counterbalance any stress signals in our nervous system... And paying attention to different parts of the body helps us to become more aware of simple sensations in the present moment. This allows us to gently listen to our bodies and bring the mind back when it gets lost in worrisome thoughts.

Let's start the meditation by sitting upright and taking a few deep breaths in through the nose, holding for a moment, and out slowly through the mouth, making sure to lengthen the out breath. On each out breath, notice how the body feels... perhaps you feel a softening or sinking as you slowly release the breath... allow yourself to settle into that feeling...

Then letting the breath return to its natural rhythm... and as you do this, allow the eyes to close gently... and bring your *attention* to your *intention* for this practice - perhaps to give your mind and body space to rebalance and just "be"... or to welcome every thought and feeling that arises without resistance... just holding your intention for a few moments...

Moving your attention to the muscles in the face... noticing the forehead... eyebrows... muscles around the eyes and eyelids... now, if you notice any tightness or tension... just see what happens when you bring soft, gentle awareness to the area, without trying to fix anything... moving to the cheeks, the jaw - how is it resting right now?... the mouth and lips... the nose and nostrils... aware of air moving in and out of the body...

Starting to move your attention with the next in breath down into the area of the chest... feeling it rise and fall, with each breath... again, allowing any and all sensations and emotions to be present... we are just noticing with curiosity and kindness...

Moving down into the belly, a gentle awareness of the movement - rising and falling - as you breathe... noticing if you're holding on slightly tense in the belly... breathe into that space... not forcing anything, but letting it naturally relax with your awareness...

[Remainder of meditation script omitted]



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WEEK 3: RESILIENCE TO STRESS & ANXIETY (20 min)

This is an example of a guided meditation, which will be available as an audio or video recording.

This is a guided meditation for moments of intense stress or anxiety - giving us a way to feel resilient even in the face of intensity and overwhelm.

In simple terms, anxiety tends to arise when two things happen: 1) we overestimate a perceived threat, and 2) we underestimate our ability to cope with it.

If you do feel intense anxiety during this meditation, that's completely fine. Try to let all of the thoughts, feelings and sensations just be there with you. What we **resist** tends to **persist**, so do your best to welcome it all in like temporary guests to the home that is you... The more we are able to fully feel what is here, the quicker we can process and move through the discomfort... The skill we are practicing here is how we can become **better at feeling** what is passing through the body and learning not to resist it.

One effective way to short-circuit the spiralling nature of anxiety is to bring our attention to what is actually happening in *this* moment. One thing we can always turn our attention to is our breathing. The breath is also a powerful tool, because we can actively calm our own nervous system when we know how to breathe in a certain way. When we breathe in, our nervous system is slightly more tense; when we breathe out, it's more relaxed - and with it, our mind. So, let's see what happens when we experiment with elongating the out-breath...

Taking a moment now to find a comfortable sitting position, where you feel supported by the surfaces beneath you... And closing the eyes if that feels okay...

Noticing your body sitting here through the sense of touch... where can you feel different contact points? In the feet? The legs, weight of the body on the chair, back, arms, hands?

Now, gently bringing your attention to the fact you are breathing... where do you notice the movement of each breath as it moves through the body... do you feel it in the nostrils, the chest, the belly? Somewhere else?

Let's consciously deepen our breathing for a minute... breathing in through the nose for a count of around 4 seconds, and out through the mouth for around 7 seconds. You don't need to get the timing perfect - we just want to make sure the out breath is longer than the in-breath.

Let's begin... In, 2, 3, 4.... Out 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7... just repeating this yourself, counting in your head for another 4 or 5 deeper breaths here... noticing sensations as they come and go...

[Remainder of meditation script omitted]



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WEEK 7: Open awareness (20 min)

This is an example of a guided meditation, which will be available as an audio or video recording.

Welcome to this meditation for cultivating an open and non-judgmental state of mind.

When we're stressed out or frustrated, the mind and body often become tight and we may experience a mental or emotional block... this is because it's difficult for creativity and joy to flow when we are in our more reactive "survival mode"!

So, in this meditation, we are going to give the mind and body a chance to unwind, unbind and open... letting go of any goals or expectations.

The guidance will slowly show you how to have a much more open focus in this practice. You could imagine that our attention is like shining different types of light into the dark. When we focus on the breath, for example, our attention is like a torch - a narrow shaft of light illuminating a specific point. In this practice, however, our attention will be more like a lantern, where the light broadly shines over a wide range of our experiences.

Finding a comfortable sitting position, body supported and alert... softening into the surfaces beneath you... and closing the eyes when you feel ready...

We'll begin by briefly scanning through the body, noticing the contact between your feet and the floor... legs and body against the chair... back... noticing how the belly feels... the chest... shoulders... arms, hands, fingers... back up to the neck... head, ears, face, jaw... nostrils... noticing air moving in and out of the body... then widening that focus to include the body as a whole, just sitting here, breathing, sensing...

Now, whilst maintaining some awareness of your body... let's try to widen that focus to include the sense of sound... what do you notice? Any sounds from your own body, the space you're in, beyond that? Now see if you can just listen to sounds coming and going, like listening to a piece of music... receiving the varying tone and volume... without needing to think about it.

Is it now possible to widen your awareness even further, to let go of investigating any one particular sense... and just allow awareness of any and all experiences that arise in the moment... from sounds, to bodily sensations, smells, taste, touch... even the appearance of thoughts or emotions... imagine all of these experiences as a textured film playing out in your awareness, and you are just observing and sensing them all.

[Remainder of meditation script omitted]