

Guided Imagery & Mindfulness Exercise: Body Image

The purpose of this mindfulness exercise is to provide you with a scene that completely absorbs your attention and distracts you away from your negative thoughts. As you become absorbed in the scene you will deepen your state of relaxation and will notice physical changes.

For body image concerns, this technique can be used to help you think about and attend to your body in a different way. You will work towards accepting your body and yourself as a whole.

This process begins by becoming mindful of your own inner experiences in the here and now.

Negative body image is produced and maintained in your mind. What do you notice about how you think about your body? What affect does this have on you emotionally? How do your negative self-statements affect your self-esteem? This exercise will help you release those negative thoughts and begin to feel appreciative of your body and accepting of yourself.

Begin by finding a comfortable position either sitting or lying down in a location where you will not be interrupted.

Closing your eyes, allow your attention to focus only on your body. If you begin to notice your mind wandering, bring it back to your body.

Take a deep breath through your abdomen, hold it for a few seconds, and exhale slowly.

Again... in...and out

As you breathe, notice your stomach rising and your lungs filling with air.

As you exhale, imagine the tension in your body being released and flowing away.

Inhale...and exhale.

Feel your body already relaxing.

Now, as you continue breathing, tune into your body. Notice how your body feels. How does it feel where it touches your clothing? Feel the pressure of your body resting on the surface on which you are lying or sitting.

Mindfully scan your body from top to bottom.

Breathe in...and out.

How does it feel? What do you see? Which areas of your body stand out more or less?

Now, think about your body image. What is body image to you?

Take some time to consider your own thoughts and ideas about your body. What are you thinking?
What do you see?

Breathe in...and out

As you think about your body, notice how you are feeling. Are you feeling comfortable, satisfied, dissatisfied, disgusted, frustrated? Whatever you are feeling, it's ok, let yourself feel.

Now tune in to the part of your body you dislike most. Spend some time thinking about that area of your body. What are you thinking? Now how do you feel? How do these thoughts make you feel? Notice how damaging these thoughts can be to your emotions.

Now imagine yourself accepting your body as it is. Imagine feelings satisfied with your physical self. What might it be like to feel comfortable with your body?

You begin to see yourself as a whole, rather than a collection of parts. You appreciate your own beauty.

Breathe in...and out

You appreciate all the wonderful things your body does for you. How it rejuvenates you when you need energy, how it relaxes you when you need rest.

You feel ok about who you are.

Now repeat after me.

I accept my imperfections. They don't define me or take away from who I am as a person.

I accept this body I am in. There is no need to be perfect.

I am free of judgment. I will no longer say negative things to myself.

I accept myself.

I am ok.

Breathe in...and out

You take a moment now to relax.

Breathe in...and out

You notice yourself feeling more calm, more satisfied.

You feel yourself beginning towards a path of self-acceptance.

You know that soon you will begin to appreciate yourself.

Breathe in...and and out

When you are ready...slowly begin to turn your attention back to your environment.

You continue to feel satisfied and relaxed.

Slowly open your eyes and stretch your body, notice how rejuvenated you feel.

Once you have returned to your usual level of alertness, resume your day, continuing to feel relaxed and satisfied.