

COMPASSIONATE BODY SCAN

Please find a comfortable position, resting on your back with your hands about six inches from your sides and your feet about shoulder-width apart. Then place one or two hands over your heart (or another soothing place), doing this as a reminder to bring affectionate awareness to yourself throughout this exercise. Feel the warmth and gentle touch of your hands. Take 3 slow, relaxing breaths, and then return your arms to your sides.

In this exercise, we will be bringing warmhearted attention to each part of the body in a variety of ways, moving from one part to another, finding what works best for each of us. We will be inclining our awareness toward the body, perhaps as you might incline toward a young child.

If you have judgments or unpleasant associations with a particular body part, or if you experience physical discomfort, you may wish to place a hand on that part of your body as a gesture of kindness, perhaps imagining warmth and kindness flowing through your hand into your body.

And if an area of your body is too difficult to stay with, moving gently to another body part for the time being, allowing this exercise be as gentle and peaceful as possible.

Starting with the *toes on your left foot*, we begin by noticing if there are any sensations in your toes. Are your toes warm or cool, dry or moist? Just feeling the sensations of your toes - ease, discomfort, or perhaps nothing at all - and letting each sensation be just as it is.

Perhaps giving your toes an inner smile of recognition or appreciation.

Then moving to the *soles of your left foot*. Can you detect any sensations there? Your feet have such a small surface yet they hold up your entire body all day long. They work so hard. Now we're giving them a little appreciation, if only a moment.

If there is any discomfort, releasing any tension and allowing that area to soften as if it were wrapped in a warm towel you like, addressing sensation with kind words, such as "There's a little discomfort there, it's okay for now."

Now feeling your *whole foot*. If your feet feel good today, you can also extend gratitude for the discomfort that you have.

Moving your attention now up your leg, one part at a time, noticing whatever body sensations are present, appreciating if the part feels fine and sending kindness if there is any discomfort. Moving slowly, still on the left side, to your...

- Ankle
- Shin and calf
- Knee

When you notice your mind has wandered, as it always will, just returning to the sensations in the particular part of your body.

If you feel uneasy or judgmental about a particular body part, try putting a hand over your heart and breathing gently, or else place a hand directly on the body part.

You might also try saying some words of kindness, "May my [knees] be at ease. May they be well." Then returning your attention to the simple sensations that are arising.